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BY

**SWAMI SADANANDA**

Published by  
Birendra Kumar Banerjee,  
20, Cornwallis Street, Calcutta.

Printed by  
Provash Chandra Ghose,  
Sree Madhab Press,  
31, Kailash Bose Street, Calcutta.

DEDICATED  
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SIR AKBAR HYDARI, KT., P.C.,

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## *Oṃ Namaḥ Śivāya*

### PREFACE

Siam (Thailand) with its majestic and primeval teak and bamboo forests is a haunted land, full of shadows, full of mystic whisperings of the past. Villages lie scattered throughout the country—covering behind old trees spread out like huge mushrooms. Time does not exist here. Men are born old and die young. Look into the eyes of women here, or of the idle youngmen, and there will be no softness visible, no tenderness whatsoever.

These little symbols of the past attracted me while I was still in Singapore in 1932. On 29th May I embarked for Siam and reached its capital Bangkok on 2nd June. After passing through the immigration formalities, I went to Vishnumandira founded by the Indians.

Bangkok is situated on the Menam, with a population of 10,00,000. The Klongs (Canals) around the city justify its name as the "Venice of the East". But as a town, it is tiresome, modern, dusty, full of noisy cars and tramways and dingy little Chinese shops and dingier little Chinamen going cloppetyclop in wooden clogs across the cobble-stones.

Those were the days of revolution in Siam when the King Prajadhipak saw with consternation amongst his subjects a great yearning for a change of Government. Revolution broke out and one afternoon while

strolling through the streets, I saw a rushing lorry loaded with Siamese soldiers shouting at the top of their voices "Chai Chai" (Sanskrit—"Jaiya Jaiya"). On enquiry I learnt that those were the rebels who were shouting at their victory. Rebel soldiers guarded the Palace, Governmental offices and the houses of the officials. But all this had no effect on the business life of the city and work went on smoothly.

The rebels did not ravage Maha Chakri, the Grand Palace, which was open to the public on Tuesday afternoons and Friday mornings. The beautiful walls around the Palace bore high testimony to Siamese architecture. Within the Palace walls could be found Wat Phra Keo, the Greenish Jasper temple of Lord Buddha. The figure of an emerald Buddha 18 inches in height is placed within the temple. On its walls could be found the painted cosmologies of the Buddhists and the pictures from Ramayana depicted beautifully. Probably the temple was built in 1785, slightly repaired and remodelled in 1848 & 1882 A. D. It was in the reign of Rama of Wat Suthat that the construction of the temple commenced and it was completed during the regime of Rama III. Inside the temple could be found a statue of Lord Buddha collected from Sukhothai in the 13th or 14th century.

There are three other temples dedicated to Siva, Vishnu & Ganesha and are known as Bot Phram. In a courtyard stood all the three temples. The first belonged to Ganesha, the second to Siva and the statues of Vishnu with Saraswaty and Lakshmi could be seen in the third.

The most notable thing in Bangkok is its National Museum which is known in Siamese as Fifttha Fun (Fifttha—varicus, fun—things). Various statues of Hindu & Buddhist deities, oil paintings, ornaments, coins, things of daily need are preserved in it. In the National Library old manuscripts with beautiful decorative covers written in Pali & Siamese languages could be seen. Stelas dated 775 A.D. with inscriptions of Ligor, of King Jaya Varman VII of Cambodia (1146 A.D.) and of King Rama Kamhaeng (1292 A.D.) are well preserved, which are good studies for a student of ancient history. On the walls could be seen paintings depicting the stories of Ramayana.

It was Phya Tak the ruler of Raheng who drove out the Burmese and founded his residence at Thonburi situated on the other side of the Menam opposite to Bangkok. He was dethroned by Chao Phya Chak-kri after a reign of fourteen years. Chao Phya Chak-kri assumed the title of Phra Phuttha Yot Fa Chulalok or Rama I ascended the throne in 1782 and shifted his capital to Bangkok. He ruled till 1809 A. D.

Phra Phutta Lo't La Nophalai or Ram II son of Ram I ruled from 1809-1824 and his son Phra Nang Klao or Ram III administered the country from 1824-1851 A.D. It was in 1851 A.D. that his brother Mongkut (Phra Chom Klao) or Ram IV ascended the throne. He had a brief reign and on the 1st October, 1868 A. D. his son Chulalongkorn (Phra Chula Chom Klao) or Ram V became the king of Siam. The king enjoyed a long reign and it was not before 24th October 1910 that his son Vajiravudh



(Phra Mongkutt Klao) could assume the title of Ram VI and rule over the country.

In December 1925 King Prajadhipak (Phra Pok Klao) brother of Ram VI became the ruler of the country but after a short time he was conscious of a change in the political outlook of his subjects. Soon a rebellion broke out, and Prajadhipak was capable to carry on the existing government by adopting certain desirable constitutional reforms.

The second time I visited Syamadesha was in February, 1935. From Prai (opposite to Penang) I went in the International Express to Bangkok. The third class compartments in the International Express were conspicuous by their cleanliness and comfort which are hardly available in any Railway of India. The fire of rebellion which I found in Siam in 1932 seemed to me still smouldering and the world saw King Prajadhipak abdicating the throne in favour of his nephew Ananda Mahipal still a minor.

The third and the last time I saw Bangkok was in August, 1936. I found a remarkable change in the outlook of the town. Siamese scavengers and rickshaw pullers were found in place of Chinese. I had the privilege to meet one Swami Satyananda Puri who was the in-charge of Maha Mukuta Raj Vidyalaya. He is a great scholar, who has translated a dozen Sanskrit books into Siamese. May Lord Siva bless all those who helped me a lot during my sojourn in Siam.

I convey my sincere thanks to Sj. K.C.De whose scholarly expositions of the French writings on Siam

have helped me a lot without which the compiling of the history of Siam would have been merely impossible.

I must also mention that Sj. Rabi Ghosh, Assistant Editor of "Telegraph" & "Bharat" lent me all his services whenever needed in bringing out this volume.

I sincerely acknowledge the help which was freely given me by Mr. Luang Boribul Buriband when I visited the National Museum of Bangkok.

But above all I am grateful to The Right Hon'ble Sir Akbar Hydari, the Prime Minister of H.E.H. the Nizam of Hyderabad (Deccan) whose kind patronage and sincere encouragement helped me to bring out this volume on Thailand.

Calutta,  
1st July, 1941. }

Sadananda Giri.



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Barely two months before Hitler plunged the greater part of Europe in youths blood to satiate his inordinate lust for wider 'Lebensraum', on the first of July, 1939 to be exact, a short decree emanated from the President of the Siamese Council altering the name of the country known as Siam into Thailand. The transformation of an autocratic rule into a republic was achieved a few years ago without bloodshed and as there was then little or no clamour for a fresh name, this change came as a surprise to the rest of the world, which was not aware of any internal trouble in recent times that would warrant this sudden decision.

The new designation signified the land of the Free (Muang Thai) and has been derived from the ethnic appellation of the majority-race occupying that particular geographical area for the last six hundred years. The old title, the country bore, was given to it by the Aryan colonials centuries before the Thais trekked from their homes in See-Chuan as a result of the continuous Chinese drive. From there, the Thais moved eastward along the fringe bordering the Gulf of Tonkin. Later, they crossed westwards to Yunnan, spread over the Shan states and finally penetrated into the region lying between the Mekong and the Menam. This emigration was not completed by any single batch or at one time. Hence when the Thais

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reached the northern confines of the present-day Siam, they came across races who had long been 'Hinduized' and were culturally far ahead of them.

The spirit of Aryan colonisation was not one of political domination or of military aggression for the sake of economic exploitation. The Hindus only desired the dissemination of their culture and religion, which too, was never forced on any inferior race at the point of arrows. Their catholicity, on the other hand, manifested itself by readily absorbing and adapting non-Aryan creeds and customs, so that the people conquered by them could easily find themselves within the fold of ever-expanding Brahmanism. Were it otherwise, the memory of Hindu ascendancy would have been wiped off long before and not cherished uptil now as the ethical and religious backbone of several races of the East.

Hence the abjuration of an ancient name could not be interpreted as some belated reaction of the Thais against Sanskrit culture. Speculations were naturally rife in the chancellories of those powers who were financially and politically interested in the Far-East. The French were shrewd enough to foresee in this apparently simple act of the state, a step towards the unification of all Thai tribes living within and without the political barriers of Siam. They gauged correctly that a solidified Thai nation under the banner of Siam would not only wrench French Laos and annex it to its Western part now under Siam, but it would seriously menace the very existence of European

Colonies in that quarter of the globe. The close affinity of variotonic idioms, employed by several groups of the same parent stock, renders the Thai of Bangkok intelligible to his brother of the Si-Kiang basin. The linguistic bar, being thus obviated, one Thai people, one Thai country and one Thai rule could be smoothly formulated, whose leadership would go to Siam as a logical sequence.

Wedged in between the scattered areas, inhabited by Thai-speaking people, lies the home of the ancient Mon-Khmers whose destiny is today controlled by the French and the British mostly. It is their abode which will be exposed to the rapacity of conquering races as it was in the past ages. If the Celtic power in the East and the Anglo-Saxon power on the West could once be weakened or eliminated, not only Indo-China but the Siam states and Burma will be threatened by the Eastern member of the Axis, to whose ambition Siam is not strong enough to offer resistance. Moreover, the mind of European politicians was then occupied fully with the unprovoked aggression in that continent. Psuedo-plebiscite and trumped-up plan for justice against imaginary wrongs served as a pretext for the inclusion of Ethiopea, the annihilation of Czecho-Slovakia, the annexation of Sudetenland, the occupation of Austria and the absorption of Albania by the Totalitarian Powers of Europe whose bid for a new world-order already found the sympathetic approval of the Island empire of the Pacific. The latter had been employing

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every ounce of her energy for three years for bringing China to her knees.

It was, therefore, no surprise that France would take alarm at this abrupt move on the part of Siam whose recent alliance with bellicose Japan lent a sinister colour to the whole procedure. The idea of French possessions in the East germinated in the mind of Louis XIV whose envoys and missionaries first made contact with Siam. But the project effloresced under the Second Empire and the French expansion continued until its very security was challenged by the growth of Nippon's sea-power. Not even in her zenith days would Paris afford a navy on the Eastern waters, which would be a sufficient protection for Indo-China. Disconcerting as the situation was, it worsened owing to the continual bickering of Japan. While the Sino-Japanese conflict was at its height, France had to unsheath her sword along with Great Britain to defend Poland against the Nazis. But her zero hour tolled when her Quislings betrayed her to the advancing Germans. With her capitulation, Japan, the Eastern Member of the Axis, found the opportunity she had long been seeking. To the eternal shame of the French arms, Hanoi had to agree to the landing of the Japanese troops on the Indo-Chinese soil and allow the operation of her air and naval activities from the French border against Chung-Ming.

But in order that her new campaign against China might be really successful, Japan had to seek a further

means to stem the flow of armaments to China *via* the famous Rangoon route, which lay through Yun-nan. This tract of land has long been a bone of contentions among different powers who covet the enormous minerals it possesses. Even China, to whom it nominally belongs, ceased to despise the less exalted culture of its inhabitants and their protection became one of the essential military problems of the Republic.

The Japanese demand for air and sea bases from Indo-China was followed by the Thailand's demand for delimitation of the French territory lying on its north-eastern frontier. A few skirmishes and air-bombardment in the borderland resulted till both parties accepted the Japanese mediation. None, on ethnical ground, would deny that French Laos should reunite with Western Laos, but if the Thailand has to part with her sovereign right as a recompense for the benevolent neutrality of Japan by allowing the latter air and seabases for her operation against Britain in the East, the gain for the Thailand would surely be a dubious one in the long run. A weakened France and a sympathetic England are much better neighbours than a powerful Axis member whose rapacity knows no bounds. Unless the Thailand eschews her present foreign policy of propitiation, she must be well-prepared to forego some of her out-lying districts for the appeasement of her 'friend'. Bombers and bayonets are better arguments in these days against greedy aggression than international understanding and obligations based on equity. Facts for non-encroach-



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ment are singularly futile in the modern era as has been proved in the case of Poland. Treaties for mutual help are just as meaningless unless both the parties are deeply alarmed at the military prowess of the aggressor. All these instruments of international arrangements have lost their solemnity since 1914. A clash with extremely militant power can be postponed but never averted in the long run and a country must herself be well-armed to preserve her integrity. The reason why we, Indians, are concerned with the foreign policy of the Thailand, is because we consider her as the first line of our eastern defence and we fully know that the Pan-Asiatic movement launched by Japan will serve her economic ends and not ours.

If a new race-consciousness has been responsible for the alteration of the country's designation, we can only expect that a day will soon dawn when it will grow more intense and discard the foreign ending to Siam's new name. Though the people who are at present charged with her governance, have decided to 'go slow' regarding the introduction of more generous democratic measures, yet they can hardly imagine that a self-respecting nation would tolerate an alien suffix in the name of what they hold most sacred. One will remember how similar sentiments brought about the transformation of St. Petersburg into Petrograd and thence into Leningrad.

A historian describes Siam as the melting pot of many races, peoples and tongues. In fact, different

branches of humanity have been attracted by her rich soil and equable climate and settled there from pre-historic days. Geographically, the country is tropical with a vast coastline in the south and hill ranges mostly in the north. These ranges are not insurmountable or impassable like our Himalayas and have often served as a gateway for northern tribes in the past. Siam's flora and fauna are almost similar to ours and central plain washed by the Mekong and the Menam with their many tributaries is extremely fertile. Her mineral resources are quite valuable and with the growth of industry, they will be consumed mostly in Siam. Tin, copper and iron have been mined and a fair deposit of rare metals like wolfram and precious stones like sapphire add to the country's wealth. Strata of sandstone resting on layers of permo-carbonic limestone have supplied in the past materials for the architectural and sculptural glory of the country. Blocks of green jade, as bright as emerald, have been unearthed in the past. A few streams of the north carry salt, the water of which is collected in shallow pools. After the brine has evaporated in the sun, one of the daily necessities is carted away by traders. Here too, there is a touch of religion. In one of these sources of salt there is a phallic emblem housed in a Khmeric tower, worshipped by saltsmen before the deposit is removed.

Rivers are navigable far inland : hence small sea-crafts of yore could easily sail up to trade-centres,

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miles away from the coast. If it be true that old Dvaravati was situated on the very spot where Ayuthya stands today, travellers like Ywen Chwang and I-tsing must have seen quite a bit of Siam's hinterland before they reached her capital. The river Menam Chao P'ya is revered as Her Excellency, the Mother-Goddess of Waters, not so much from nature-worship-viewpoint as for the services she has been rendering the capitals of Siam for ages as the cheap commercial waterway.

Forests of Siam yield valuable timber some of which can be fashioned into intricate designs of which her artisans are honestly proud of. Moreover, most of the telescopic roofs and their fixtures, which display fine wood carving are built with indigenous timber. Mills are covered with green shrubs and cone-bearing trees, like tropical pine, whose foliage is often hidden under thick parasitic weeds and except for two small volcanoes at Cieng Sen, Siam may be said to be quake-free. Hot springs there are, which have medicinal value. Such a country where nature has been bountiful in her gifts was sure to invite humanity from remote periods.

The entire south-eastern peninsula shows traces of neolithic men whose axe-head celts have also been found in Assam, Burma and Indo-China. The reason for their absence in the Central Siamese plain may be that this portion is of recent geological origin. Probably the sea had not then retarded and the land-level was not sufficiently high to permit human

habitation during the stone-age. At the dawn of the historical era, the whole area was peopled by Negritoes whose scattered tribes are today found in the districts of Pattani and Pataleng of Siam as well as in the hills of Malay and Indo-China. The forbears of these Negritoes must have at one time resided in the caves of Upper Tonkin where their skulls have been discovered. The Negritoes were probably driven to less accessible places when the hordes of the Proto-Australians reached this corner of the globe from their Mediterranean home. In their eastward spread, they covered India and the maritime districts of Burma. From there they roamed all over the Malay Peninsula and the East Indies. They settled in groups and after they had increased in number, their progeny were again 'on the road' for fresh pasture, for their cattle and for more soil for their own subsistence. This was, of course, the way with all aboriginal tribes and the Proto-Australians were no exception. When they found no new land, they crossed the sea till they reached Australia. The sequence of the aboriginal emigrations is problematical and there is nothing to show that the Proto-Australians came before the Negritoes or vice-versa.

A tendency which the scientist of the late nineteenth century would have been pleased to describe as an instance of 'the survival of the fittest', is observed among the primitive people in early times. Today totems and taboos restrict the scope of inter-tribal marriage but a much wider scope was allowed

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when the women of the defeated were appropriated by the leaders of the conquering horde. This absorption of the weak by the strong necessarily did not mean the total assimilation of one race by another as we still find the two parent stocks and their melange side by side. Such was probably the origin of the Melanesians who were outcome of the long sojourn of the Negritoes and the Proto-Australians in India. Curiously enough, like the Proto-Magnons, whose skulls have been discovered even in the caves of Tonkin, these Melanesians are no longer observed on the mainland of Asia or on the islands adjacent to it. Hence it appears a little far-fetched to imagine that they ever paid any visit to Siam. It would be just as good as to suggest, in the absence of direct proof, that they took canoes to New Guinea and beyond, straight from India.

The next wave that traversed Siam on their journey for fresh means of subsistence was that of the Proto-Malaya from their abode in the highland of Tibet. They crossed the hill barriers of Burma and Siam in order to reach the western shore of the Gulf of Siam. The main group settled in Malaya ; but as they multiplied, a branch of theirs moved up along the eastern coast of the Gulf and penetrated into Cambodia and lower Cochin-China. Again they must have branched out and set for Southern Annam. It was their descendants who came to be known as the Chams and according to the records left by the Chinese, the Hindu colonials, met them in

about 192 A. D. ; This was the beginning of the powerful state of Champa which lasted for a couple of centuries in the least.

Like the Proto-Malaya, a branch of the Austro-Asiatics filtered through the hilly regions of the north. These people occupied the territory between Burma and Annam from the days of their megalithic civilisation of shouldered shelters. Their speech could be traced to the Mundas of Chota Nagpur through a string of tribes like the Wa, the Palung and the Reang of the Assamo-Burma frontier. Fortunately for their descendants, an early contact with the Aryan culture changed the Mons of Burma and Siam and the Khmers of Siam and Cambodia into powerful nations who became later on founders of mighty states. Were it not for this influence, the Austro-Asiatics would have been today despised as savages like the Khas, who too, once possessed a great territory in the prehistoric times.

When Champa had reached the pinnacle of her power, another Hinduized state took its shape further west. It was called according to the chronicler of the Wu dynasty, Fou-nan and included all principalities between the delta of the Tankiso-lo and the entrance to the Bay of Bengal. Its northern boundary covered Laos and its southern limit reached the straits, Kambujadesha of the Aryan literature was one of its vassal state where the Khmers mostly congregated while Dvaravati and Haripunjaya remained in the hands of the Mons, all of which separated

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on the decline of Fou-nan. The name at least stuck to Kambujadesha even when I-tsing visited it in 664 A.D., which then underwent slight modification and was called Panan (Vanam ?).

The annals of pre-Thai-Siam open with the story of the growth, exploits and the fall of various Mon and Khmer principalities. Of the earliest states, Haripunjaya and Dvaravati were by far the most important but we know very little of them. All that we can definitely state regarding Haripunjaya are derived from seven stone inscriptions engraved in old Mon scripts. These were found near the site of the old capital which Camadevi, a Princess of Lavo, founded in 654 A. D. It continued to maintain its Mon government till the beginning of the 13th Century and it repelled successfully an unprovoked aggression from the south in the 12th century ; the Khmers of the Menam valley never could conquer Haripunjaya which was burnt to the ground by the Laotien chieftain Mongrai in 1213 A. D. The seat of the new government for the old principality was established at Chieng Mai. The northernmost point of the state was Chieng Sen which stood on the caravan route to Pagan which, on the fall of Prome, had become the centre of Theravadism, the old Mons professed, who not only spoke the same tongue as the people of Hamsavati and Sudhammapura but the script they employed was akin to the one seen on the tablet engraved at Pagan. It must be admitted that the dispossessed Mons of Haripunjaya suffered

very little from cultural or religious view point owing to political bouleversement except for the slow shifting of the focus of Theravadiam from Lower Burma to Ceylon.

Of Dvaravati, we can speak still less authoritatively and the wide gape in her history have to be bridged over by facts indirectly derived from sculptural remains and from hints left in different records. It is surmised that the earliest reference to Dvaravati has been made between the 5th and the 6th centuries, which probably was the period when Dvaravati seceded from the paramountcy of Fou-nan. That Dvaravati was not only the cradle of the first Mon-Indian sculpture but it was also that of the primitive Khmer art, the specimen of which has been discovered at Sri Deva. It is, of course, too mutilated to be definitely indentified with any known style or period. References to Dvaravati as Chi-tu were made as early as 607 A. D. and travellers like Ywen-Chwang and I-tsing were supposed to have visited its shores. While at a later date, Dvaravati was mentioned as a port on the shore between Arracan and the Mekong delta. The school of art which received its patronage spread from Chaiya to Rathuri and from P'ra Pat'om to Lopburi and Prachin, Brahmanism which flourished under Fou-nan, declined as the missionary activities of the Buddhist spread. This should not be interpreted that either of the two Indian cults exclusively replaced the other. The spirit of tolerance pervaded the Aryanised principalities and the regions where



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the Hindus colonised bear ample evidence of mutual respect between two creeds. Thus a stanza composed in honour of the Lord Siva in 484 A. D. by a Buddhist Monk named Sakya Nagasena clearly indicates the peaceful atmosphere under which people of different cults could live and carry on their political, social and economic activities.

There was a host of other states under the Mon-Khmer domination but in the absence of authentic records most of them are mere names to us. Thus in 368 A. D., we hear of Prince Sinhanavati founding Yonaka Nakanakon in the north. But we cannot say who this prince was or to which ruling house he belonged, or whether the city founded by him was really his capital or not. Again, we hear that the same king ousted the Khmers from this city of Umong Kassla Nakon and drove them from the rest of their strongholds in the north. In 756 A. D. we are told that a son of Khun Borom founded Chieng Sen. We do not know how many districts constituted the kingdom of Payao in 638 A. D. It is possible that quite a number of city states like Sri Sajjanalai, Sukhothai (Sukhodaya) and others were founded longbefore the Thais moved southwards. But an archeo-logical survey of Siam on a much more elaborate scale than that has been possible at present is absolutely necessary to bring to light the relics of Siam's hoary past.

The relations between India and Siam were maintained regularly and the finds at places like Sri Deva

prove beyond doubt that the Hindu colonials penetrated far inland. One of the embassies from China to India during the reign of the Wu dynasty (229-65) A. D., used on their return voyage a port of embarkation called Tan-Kia-to on the Gulf of Martaban. To facilitate this transshipment across the peninsula of Malay, the embassy must have used.

The historiographer of the Wu dynasty (229-65 A.D.) mentions that the Chinese Embassy to India employed a port of embarkation called Tan-Kiao-lo on the Gulf of Martaban. To facilitate this transshipment across the peninsula a port of disembarkation was necessary on the Gulf of Siam. If "Tan-Kiao-lo" was identical with Ptolemy's city Takola and with modern Takuapa, it would be fair to surmise that the east-coast gateway for the transpeninsular route should be Bandon of these days. Very probably, the port of the state of Chaiya was situated where Bandon is today, and if we are allowed to suppose that no particular name of the port is mentioned is because the port was known to the ancient mariners by that of the famous capital and the state, we need no more to presume that the river on which Bandon stands used to flow where Chaiya is situated and that it has receded since then. We have another such instance in Dvaravati which the travellers of olden times mention as situated on the coast. The only name that mattered in those days was that of the seat of administration which often lent itself to the country or principality which is served.

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The Menam Laung which is often devoted locally by the word "Nati" (Sanskrit Nadi) is quite navigable and its head waters and those of the river on which Takuapa stands are only a few miles apart, a distance easily negotiable by men and beasts of burden. Moreover, Takuapa was an outlet for the great emporium of Tung Tiik which probably dealt in gold dust accumulated from near-by sandy river-beds. Both Chaiya (or its port Bandon) and Takuapa still display the remnants of 144 vast Aryan colonial efforts. Hence, though the Isthmus of Kra is the narrowest portion of the peninsula, yet the Bandon-Takuapa route being as hilly would offer less troublesome passage than the Champoorn-Pakchai route, as Colonel Gerini suggests. The latter would mean that the people had to cross a rugged stretch of thirty miles whereas the distance between the headwaters of the Takuapa and the Menam Taung is under twelve miles.

The remains of an early civilisation have been discovered in nearby regions which link them with the central South Indian sculpture of the same period. The wheel of law and other symbolical representations came from Ceylon via Ligor, and that a regular intercourse was maintained from the time of the Dvaravati kingdom could be proved from the abundance of Indian motif in sculpture and architecture. No doubt there is that all the routes were fully utilised. As direct sea-routes to Cambodia were known to the Hindus it is more likely that the technique of Indian Gupta

sculpture which came into vogue six hundred years earlier at Amaravati reached Ankor Boeri straight from the source and not through Dvaravati where craftsmanship was not as magnificent as that of the Khmer city. During the 12th century, the Cambodians under Jayavarman II dominated over the states of Siam. There are bas-reliefs of Mon soldiers in the Khmer army and this military obligation arose as a punishment for the Mon insubordination. The Khmer paramountcy was short-lived, for, we find the Dvaravati people free once more. But the decadence of the Mon had set in and the decline of Dvaravati and Haripunjaya was hastened by repeated onslaughts of the Thais. The Mons gradually lost their political hold and slowly merged with the conquering people through intermarriage. They adopted the Thais tongue and their manners and customs. The Mon script persisted for a long time as did the Hinayana School of Buddhism to which they belonged. The Mons, that we see to day in Siam, are not the ancient stock that founded Haripunjaya and Dvaravati. The present Mons first came to Siam in 1584 A.D., again in 1663 and 1774 A. D. and their exodus terminated in 1818 A. D. Alike the Mons of yore, the latter people too accepted Thai leadership and possessed no legend regarding national ambition other than that of the ruling race. Some of them, like Chaopya Maha Yotha, rose to responsible positions. He led the Thai army to victory over the opponents of Siam. The Mons served their Thai kings gallantly in all conflicts

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with the Burmans and except somatic differences there is hardly any similarity between the Mon and the Thai. Though recently an attempt has been made to revive the Mon characters and literature. But this reaction has been so mild that it is hard to find in Siam any Mon reading the ancient scripts fluently. The Mons of later days congregated mostly at Ayuthya, (Ayodhya) Samkok, Paklat, Dhonburi, Othalthani, Lopburi, Kanchanburi and other places. The Khmers of Siam are found today chiefly at Buriram, Surin, Khu Khan and Chantburi. They, too, adopted Siamese customs and dresses.

Before we described the advent of the Thais, the last and the most important of all emigrations to Siam, we would like to mention a few of the diverse races, besides the Mon-Khmers that have found shelter in that country. Some of them are the intermixture of the Mon Khmers with Mongloid groups like the Lawas of Chieng Mai. These latter races erect megaliths to their graves in which they bury the weapons of their dead heroes and which, the Karens, their neighbours, exhume and retrieve the buried arms. The Karens come of a Tibet-Chinese stock and though they physically resemble the Reangs, they employ an idiom quite peculiar to themselves. Utter savages, like the Khas, are only met in the heart of forests where they roam stark naked in search of wild games. To judge by appearance, the Khas have progressed little since the prehistoric times when, in the opinion of certain ethnologists, they wielded power over an extensive

domain. There are a few of the primitive people living today in Western Laos whose presence won the province the denomination of 'Yonokrahtra' from the Hindu colonials.

The Thais originally hailed from the southern reaches of the Hwang-Ho and the Yang-tse-Kiang where some tribes show marked racial and linguistic affinity to the Thais of Siam. The chronicles of the Lak Thai speak of two independent Thais states, N'akon Pa and N'akon Luang in ancient days which in all probability owed allegiance to the Chinese, however nominal it might have been. That the Thais always displayed an indomitable love for freedom and that they were too turbulent for the Chinese to control, are proved by the opprobrious remarks hurled against them in early Chinese court records. In 69 A. D., the Thais rose in arms and it took nine long years for the paramount power to quench their insurrection. A horde of the rebels had to be chased across the frontiers and these ultimately found their way to the Northern Shan States. Those, who remained behind, left the authority in peace for the next hundred and forty seven years at the end of which period they gathered once more strength to challenge the Imperial troops of the Sze-Ch'uan Government. The contemporaneous remarks to the Thais are far from being complementary. These 'barbarians' were called the Ai Laos whose confederacy, the Pongaswadan chronicles state, consisted of six autonomous provinces, viz., Mongsui, Lase,

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Langkang, Tenglang, Saling and Mongse. The last-named must have been the most powerful of the lot and in it was situated Mongse or Talifu, the seat of central administration. As the date of the foundation of Mongse is omitted by the Lan C'ang legends, it is difficult to accept the fact that Sapiong, a son of one Khun Borom, the chief of Tang, was responsible for the same. The Muang Mo chronicles, however, refer to six states having been carved out by the six enterprising sons of Khun Lu in 568 A. D. One of them, who occupied Teng, was supposed to have ousted at the same time the Mon Thado Thammaraja of the House of Tassaraja from his principality of Tagaung situated on the Shweli which washed the northern confines of Burma. It is possible that the young conqueror assumed 'Khun Borom' which meant the chief of Burma. The same date 568 A. D. is also given by another set of legends for the foundation of Nakan'akon Yonok Chieng Sen by a ruler named, Sinhanavati, who dispossessed the Khmers of this area of their strongholds like the city of Umongkasela. From these it is manifest that owing to their superior martial qualities the Thais became masters of a vast territory in the north of Burma and Siam by the sixth century A. D. and it was, here, they encountered for the first time culturally superior Aryanized races.

For authenticity, the Chinese references are much more valuable than the local legends, which are littered with anachronism and imaginary events and

are often described to span the discontinuity in their narration. The Chinese do not refer to the Thais after their clash in Sze-Ch'uan as no occasion arises during the next four centuries and a quarter. By that time the powerful state of Nanchao had come into existence and seriously menaced the authority of the third Tang Emperor. Whatever might have been the issue of the friction between Nanchao and China, all signs of hostility disappear for the next century and a quarter. The Thai Chief, named Pilawko, attacked the outposts of the Chinese empire in the south probably in the early years of the eight century. His son, who was more daring than his father, is supposed to have established his new capital at Talifu in 750 A. D. Whether the city was in existence, the records do not mention, but that it was the same as Mongse of Sapiong, need not be doubted. In 754 A. D. he marched against the Chinese overlord and captured thirty-two towns. The campaign was undertaken as a retaliatory measure against the insults offered to the chief by the governor of Hunan and to ensure his success the Thai lord was diplomatic enough to make a treaty with the vassal of Tibet, who was to aid the ruler of Nanchao in his defence. The Chinese counter-attack was repelled and the state of Nanchao continued to prosper till the grandson of this illustrious ruler ascended the throne.

From the foregoing details, it is apparent that the Thais, at least a good few of them, settled in Northern Shan States. To reach the district of Chieng Sen



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most of them had to pass through Pa-Yi or Yun-nan and an offshoot of theirs visited Tay or Tonkin. They were on no goodwill mission and the people through whose lands they marched offered as much welcome as militant nomads could expect. Resistance must have been stubborn and except where Quislings abounded, the Thais had to pay with their blood for every foothold they obtained. Many of those who resisted the Thais were mowed down but at least there were a few who gave them as hot as they received.

Moreover, the means of communication and the system of transportation were far from desirable. They had hills to climb and slopes to negotiate ; rivers had to be forded and men and (cattle if any) beasts of burden ferried across. They could carry little food with them either for themselves or for their animals. Hence they had to supplant the weaklings and step in their place wherever possible. Thus the strangers became masters and in course of time intermarriage with the original tribes would produce mixed races. These latter mark today the progress of the Thai drive towards the south. It is difficult to suggest if they had already embraced Buddhism before they started from China but even then their religious tenets underwent a considerable change when they settled in Yunnan during the 7th-8th century A. D. The school of Buddhism prevalent in the north of Siam was dominated by doctrines preached by monks of Pagan and Pegu. These drew

largely upon the models esteemed high in Bengal, Burma and China.

As we have mentioned before that the first Thai settlement perhaps germinated around Chieng Rai and the Prince P'rom who erected the city of 'Jaya Prakar' was probably a descendant of, if not identical with the Khun Borom of Tagaung fame. The word 'Prakar' in Sanskrit means a wall and probably the city was intended as a fortified outpost to counterbalance any attack made from the south of Chieng Rai district. The town of Chieng Rai did not come into existence until centuries after when Mongrai was delivering the final blow to the Mons of north.

Even when the Thais were placed firmly on the soil of modern Siam, they did not hesitate to marry into families of non-Thai origin. Not only they accepted the daughters of the conquered but gave theirs to appease chieftains more powerful than they were. Thus Lao Mong (the name suggests an interbreed between a Thai and a Mon) the twenty-third ruler of Chieng Sen (who might have another name at that time) married a princess of Chiengrung and the fruit of the union, the famous Mongrai was always looked upon as a Thai chief. This marriage probably cemented the breach between various smaller Mon rulers and the growing Thai monarch of the north, so that later on Mongrai could count on their neutrality when he swooped on Haripunjaya. But no attempt to consolidate the petty principalities was successful before the Khmer rule in the Lower Menam

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valley could be destroyed. The various coins unearthed in modern times bear witness to the existence of a number of coin-issuing states, specially in the north.

There is little doubt that the northern states were inhabited by men of great culture even from remote times. Old coins excavated in the northern region are peculiar in shapes and the Chieng money, often shows the names of the states stamped on them as well their respective values. There were many coins resembling the flower, the leaf, the horsehoof, the pigmouth, the bar and the bullet and these were dug in near the sites of the ancient capitals. The Chieng Sen coins are lighter and bear little similarity to coins of Ayuthya and are of lower denomination. The "bullet" money which is unlike the "bar" money of the Mekong valley is a short cigar shaped bar of silver of which the ends have been inverted. The Chieng money was probably an imitation of the crescent coins stamped by the now extinct Pyu race of Burma.

That the Thais came in separate waves at different epochs can be seen from their scattered existence in Siam of today. Those who occupy the Menan region are the Thai proper ; there are those settled at Uborn and Roi Ett, called the Thai Gaos : those who occupy the North-Eastern province are called the Laos ; the Thai folks of Udom are known as the Thai Viengs. Different groups of the same ethnic origin are seen at Sak, Nakhon Swan, Fitsanulok, (Vishnuloka) and in

the Prachin area. Altogether the Thais number over ten millions souls who in spite of marked local differences (which point to the fact that they could not have all arrived at the same time) of dialects, manners, customs, nay, even of wearing apparels are trying their utmost to solidify into one people, homogeneous in all respects. Petty dissimilarities will vanish as better means of communication are established and the quicker exchange of ideas between two remote groups are made possible by spread of uniform education. Signs are not wanting for this ultimate fusion and loose federation of several races living in the same geographical area had already been achieved when the autocratic kingship of Siam was replaced without bloodshed by the National Council of the Thailand. But further democratic measures must forthcome ; a government of the people is not enough ; it must be a government for the people as well as by the people. It is an arduous task the selfless patriots have to set themselves to with determination. It will tax all the energy and patience they command and require unflinching devotion to the peoples cause to knit closely the interest of various groups so that Siam would present a uniform pattern and not a zig-saw puzzle of communal or party brickerings. Hence those who will place themselves at the helm of the country's affairs must have sagacity and foresight to be always prepared for any eventuality. They should forestall any complication which will foster internal unrest or will endanger her foreign relations. If

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further democratic measures are introduced at this stage which will ensure a more representative legislature based on adult franchise the whole burden of the state and its concomitant responsibility will fall on a few. The continuation of the present system confirms the prevalent view that the Thais wish to run their administration on totalitarian principles and it would not be therefore surprising if the head of the executive will assume dictatorship on the Axis model. Democracy tends to create a living organism which has the voice and will of the majority behind it. But dictatorship is a life-less one man show and is entirely dependent on the judgment of an individual for its safe guidance. Megalomania develops and ambition personal or otherwise, often leads to internal disruption and to the breach of external relations and leaves a heritage of debt and rancour after the demise of the dictator for the posterity to bear the brunt of.

The importance of the Thai incursion into Siam can be judged in the light of subsequent developments alone. It heralded the birth of a new nation where previously resided in well-marked boundaries diverse races and where out of a chaos of petty principalities, rose a mighty kingdom. It ushered an epoch when economic and political horizon widened ; when social and religious institutions were remodelled ; when arts and crafts, architecture and sculpture, language and literature, all assumed characteristics of their own. It accounted for the dynamic force which manifested itself in the first Thai settlement of the

north ; which gathered momentum under Sukhothai, which urged Ayuthya to resist and repel repeated invasions. It was the same force, the most vital, which helped the Siamese recuperate inspite of the decadence that set in following the Burmese reverses ; It aided Bangkok in consolidating her rule and in inspiring her to fresh deeds of fresh glory. It was this force which within the last decade entered its final phase when a bloodless revolution transformed mediaeval kingship into a governance by the sovereign people.

From the very outset, the Thais appear to have enriched the country of their adoption by introducing crafts that were unknown to the land. One of these was ceramics. The Khmers who preceded the Thais excelled in metal work which they learned from the Hindus but they could produce only fragile slightly glazed baked clay wares. Except for their exquisite shapes, those utensils were too inferior in decorations and durability to find circulation beyond the domain proper of the Khmer. This is probably the reason why so little traces of the old Khmer crockery have been discovered in districts where the Mons prevailed, whereas the Khmer-ridden regions like Khorat abound in these relics. But a very high percentage of potteries unearthed in towns like, Pong T'uk, Tung Yeng, Chalieng, Kalong. Sukhothai, Sri Sajjanalai, Pitsanulok, Muang Pep, Kampong Phet, U'tong, Nakon Patom and Lopburi is of pure Thai or of Sino-Thai origin.

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It has been cherished belief for a long time that the pioneers of Ceramic industry in Siam were the Chinese potters from Chihili who came in a batch of three to five hundred at the invitation of King Ram Kamhaeng of Sukhothai. Without assailing the truth of the presence of Chinese artisans at Sukhothai during Ram Kamhaeng's reign, suffice it to state that some eight hundred years before Siam may be said to have begun the manufacture of glazed porcellaneous utensils. And to the first Thai colonists of the area where the Mekong rises goes the credit of this innovation.

Dispute there ought to be none that these Thai path-breakers were firmly established by the first quarter of the sixth century A.D. perhaps a long time before the Chinese drove the main Thai stock from their territories. Of the four chief centres of ceramic manufacturies, *viz.* Kalong, Chalieng, Sukhothai and Sri Sajjanalai, the first two must have been founded at the beginning of the sixth century A.D., if not earlier. Even old towns like Pong T'uk and Tung Yeng knew of Kalong wares while the lowest levels excavated at other towns have produced only Chalieng glazed potteries. At a much higher level we come across Chinese wares of the Sung period (960-1260 A.D.) and at a still higher stratum do we find those of the Ming period ( 1368-1604 A.D. )

In a region where nestle towns of hoary antiquity like Wieng Ho and Dong Wieng. at a point midway between Chieng Rai and Chieng Mai lies the hamlet of

Kalong. It must have been one of the oldest military outposts as the vestiges of the two parallel mud walls seem to suggest. There are three sites where kilns are still seen and at least in one of them something like a hundred of these furnaces can be detected. They were of two sizes, the smaller ones measuring approximately nine feet and the larger ones some twenty-one feet in length. All the kilns were designed alike, turtle-shaped domes with in-built chimneys for smoke and flues for draught of air. The spy-holes are seen on the side in rows and while the one end of the kiln touches the mother earth, the other terminates flatly in an aperture for the furnace. Kalong goods required slow heating for baking. Like all Thai constructed furnaces, the floors present even surfaces and do not slope.

In absence of more authentic statements than those recorded in the chronicles regarding the kingdom of Sri Sajjanalai, we have to accept 500 A.D. as the year of Chalieng's foundation. It was at least a century and a half older than Haripunjaya which copied the plan of the former town's enclosures. There is little doubt that Chalieng still enjoyed its old reputation when Ram Kamhaeng came to the throne. In one of his inscriptions he mentions Chalieng as the site on which the Great Relic Wat of old Savankalok (Swankaloka) was erected. A similar reference to Chalieng is made in another stone tablet commemorating the building of a nine-column vihara by one Prince Phan. That Chalieng was of long



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standing may also be gathered from the condition of the ruins of its edifices which crumbled to the grounds years ago and are now overgrown with wild trees outside the town-walls of Sri Sajjanalai. Moreover, the Buddhamurtis of Chalieng differ in many respects from those of later periods, which again indicates its ancientness.

That no baked clay crockery has been brought to light from the subsoil of Chalieng has led some to presume that from the time of its foundation the town knew no other utensils than glazed wares. The shape of Chalieng kilns approaches that of Kalong, though in construction it differs a good deal from the latter. The sides of neatly executed brickwork do not provide for spy-holes ; the passage for smoke lies along the kiln floor and issues out in a conical tower at one end. This arrangement was made for conservation of heat as temperature for baking Chalieng wares as the heat required was much higher than that of Kalong. The reason why greater heat was necessary was that the Chalieng potters mixed fine chalk with their clay. We can not say from how far this chalk had to be fetched but we can easily surmise that it added to the cost of production at Chalieng factories. How the potters used to withdraw their wares after baking was not quite clear to our modern excavators, which was responsible for the breakage of crockeries discovered in unopened kilns. These kilns were probably abandoned when potters were removed to Chieng Mai.

Chalieng wares were flat-bottomed as they were heated on an even surface and prongmarks are noticed on some of the articles. Air-bells were due to the defect in method and material while crackles were not the result of any pre-concieved decoration but that of wear and tear. A white thick slip which necessitated higher temperature for baking was applied on already incised and painted things. Each colour was used separately and polychromes show five to six chief pigments. Kalong had special emerald green tint besides those used at Chalieng and from a combination of these could produce a considerable number of shades. The glazed utensils were thinner but more durable than ordinary baked clay articles and their success was so immense that they used to be exported to distant places like Java and the Philippines. Before Sukhothai came to open its own battery of kilns it exclusively used Chalieng potteries.

As a matter of fact, the Chalieng kilns were extinguished only four years before the fall of Sukhothai. The reasons why the industry at Chalieng had to be abandoned were many. The first was the higher cost of production to which we have referred above. The second was the amount of breakages was also greater as the principle of heat-regulation was not accurately known. The third was probably the more attractive wares which Sukhothai began to manufacture under Chinese inspiration and which appealed to the growing aesthetics of the Thai buyers. Perhaps nothing contributed to the decline of Chali-

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eng pottery more than the erosion of the river bank which began to threaten the security of the town which had to be abandoned and a few miles to the north Sri Sajjanalai had to be founded. Until then distinction between Chalieng and Sri Sajjanalai used to be made, but afterwards two were confused by the people.

Sukhothai was probably older than Chalieng as the lowest level reached in the former town shows traces baked clay articles. But it was not until Sri Suriyapongs ( the House of the Sun, or the Solar Dynasty, an epithet probably imitated from the famous line mentioned in one of the Hindu Epics ) Maharaja Thammaraja II sided with one of the parties to the internecine war of Chieng Mai and removed along with the rest of the population the potters from Kalong and Chalieng. Kalong ceased its manufacture probably from that time onward while Chalieng managed to re-establish its industry once more. Sukhothai kilns were similar to those of Kalong and the process of slow-heating was introduced by men originally drafted from Kalong. The kiln of Sukhothai was no longer the turtle-back but an almost perfect dome at the end of which was a low-roofed square chamber. Spy-holes reappeared and the conical chimney was omitted, though the floor of the kiln began to slope in the manner of the Chinese. The products became more and more porcellaneous as the Chinese technic began to assert itself. The black and brown motifs of Tou-Chou came to be in vogue,

which were painted and not incised on the articles after they were dipped in thin white slip. Knobs gave way to round handles and the signs of 'three felicities' began to be included in the decorations. Then a straw-colour glaze was applied to the wares before they could be put on special tray. The tray was shoved in the kiln and the door was closed tightly. Some of the Chinese-inspired wares of Sukhothai at least were coarser and thicker and not all of them were decorated. Plain monochromes were also manufactured with decorated polychromes with glazes other than the light yellow colour. 'Chakra' and 'Ketumala' designs were probably introduced out of deference to Ceylonese Buddhism.

What Sukhothai could have produced eventually would be a matter of non-profitable speculation but the fact remains that Sukhothai kilns were extinguished only nineteen years after they were kindled. The industry now found its way to Sri Sajjanalai where it flourished for the next seventy-two years. Probably, the Chinese also helped a good deal in starting ceramics at this new centre, but designs became more and more Hinduized owing to stronger religious influence of various reformed Wats. But plasticity was gone and the motifs became more and more hackneyed. But the export trade which began to flow through the port of Martaban under Sukhothai continued till wares ceased to be produced in 1446 A.D. It was due to the removal of the whole population from Sri Sajjanalai to Chieng Mai at the command of P'ya Yuti-

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tsacieng, a Thai chieftain, once more the Chalieng like Sri Sajjanalai kilns had to be left alone for good. For almost nine hundred years the industry had been in existence when it was suddenly snuffed out at the bidding of a whimsical military chief. We have been only able to give a rapid survey of this wonderful craft of Siam, the study of which would be far more interesting in various details.

It was not Ceramics alone which received the Thai patronage. The Khmer domination of the Menam Valley was responsible for the percolation of Cambodian ideas into Siam, which were adapted to Thai conception when the table turned and Siam held the Khmers under her power during the 13th-15th centuries. Frescoes, mural paintings and architectural flourishes were all preserved but given a Thai outlook. What the Thais added were certain details which further elaborated what were already complicated by the Cambodians. It resulted in a monotonous rigidity based on inflexible Siamese canons, almost boresome in its innumerable details. This movement which cannot be claimed as a happy augury is noticed in minor crafts like wood carving and lacquer work. But in spite of these hide-bound monotonous conceptions none of the arts were allowed to be extinct. The only branch that escaped the hand and past rules of theory were the immaculate bronze images.

If the lack of novelty was responsible for the monotony of decorative art the same cannot be levelled against the evolution of Siamese alphabet and

literature. Though the Thai characters might have originated long while back, they must have been profoundly impressed by those of the Khmers. The language of the Thai covers an extensive terrain which only modern means of quick transport and communication has shortened the time taken in covering it. As this was not possible before the end of the 19th century the manner of writing and the way of pronouncing the same word has been varied. Some of them retained Hindu alphabet while others have altered it. Some are inclined to write in horizontal line and others prefer vertical columns. Some have preserved the original forms and others have transformed them. Some write from right to left whereas others do the reverse way. But not until king Ram Kamhaeng ascended the throne at Sukhothai, the final forms of the Siamese letters were decided upon. Ram Kamhaeng's own inscription states "Heretofore these strokes of Thai writing were not. In 1205 of the era, year of the Goat, Prince Khun, Ram Kamhaeng sought and desired in his heart and put into use these strokes of Thai writing. And so there are these strokes of Thai writing because that Prince employed the same". It clearly points to the fact that Ram Kamhaeng did not invent Thai alphabet nor the script but simply elaborated. The initiative he took in 1283-84 A. D. was at first slow in its application, but it tolled the death-knell to the archaic Mon scripts which had been hitherto exclusively used in all writings of Siam. For of the reformation of the alphabet and its spread in the

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country King Ram Kamhaeng had to take the help of the teachers of Pali from Ceylon. He could count among the learned men of his line the head of the religious body who knew by heart the three pitaks and it was probably under his direction that the Thai evolved the script of the nation.

It was one thing for an enthusiast like King Ram Kamhaeng to evolve a new script and have a tablet engraved in the same characters for commemorating the occasion, it was quite another matter to ensure its application nationwide. The Khmers and their late subjects the Mons were naturally loth to forego all of a sudden the manner of writing they were so long familiar with in preference to a new one their conqueror wished to impose upon them. Besides, the Aryanised races could only think even of their mundane affairs in the light of their religion. The literacy efforts of the age were confined to the belief they cherished. Hence composing or transliterating chiefly centred round religious themes and dogmas, which only monks were educated enough to undertake. The preponderance or the diminution of works on any special tenets varied directly with their growth or their decline in popularity. Moreover, monasteries were not only depositories of manuscripts but monks were also largely responsible for the spread of sacred and secular education. King Tissaraja might be hailed as having given an impetus in the right direction to the literary movement of the day when he established the direct spiritual bondage between his

principality and Ceylon. In 1361 A. D. the Ceylonese Theras visited the Sukhothai monasteries but a steady in-flow of Pali texts and annotations only ensued when the Siamese started voyaging to and studying at the fountain-head of Theravadism. This promoted the transliterations of Pali works into the script of the country and the Kamhaeng alphabet had at last a fair chance of being accepted by the majority.

This change in writing was thus gradual in coming. It was the same case with the north where the Kamhaeng script travelled not long after its inception in the south. At the outset, the scribes and the scholars of Chieng Mai discountenanced its introduction, inspite of the fact that Thai was in all probability the court language. True it is, the Haripunjaya had lost her political ascendancy, but the mass of the north who had enjoyed freedom for a longer period than that of the south retained much of their cultural and religious liberty. The popular medium of expression as well as the style of writing continued to be Mon, the monumental script of which added gracefulness to the marginal orientation of manuscript folios. The decoration of manuscripts passed on to the Thais as a heritage from the Mons of the north. What was more, the Mons of Haripunjaya were more closely related to their brethren across the Burma border than to those of Dvaravati who had imbibed Mahayanism from their Khmer masters. According to the Camadevivamsha, Pegu and Thaton spoke the same idiom as that of



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Haripunjaya, which was known then as Ramanna. The people of Laos still employ "Asksaro Ramanyo" in their writing and the old Mon script of the north resembles a good deal the characters engraved on the lithic tablet found at Pagan. Theravadism which Haripunjaya professed migrated there from the Salwin Irawaddy basin at the time when Sona and Uttara were commanded by Emperor Asoka to preach the gospel of Gautama to "Subannabhumi (Burma)". Perhaps Haripunjaya never came into direct contact with Buddhist India. By the sixth century A. D. Theravadism gravitated to Kanchipuram and letterings on fragments of Buddhist texts discovered at Prome (Srikshestra) suggest that the latter town was the corresponding foyer of this particular creed on the eastern shore of the Bay. With the destruction of Prome, religious centres at Hamsavati, Sudhammapura and Pagan began to predominate, from where Lumpun and Chieng Mai drew their religious inspiration. On the fall of Haripunjaya, the monasteries at Nabhisipura began to achieve distinction. Even four years after the Ceylonese Theras visited Sukhothai King Kilani sent for Udumbara Mahsami, a monk of Pegu who had studied his doctrines at Ceylon for carrying on religious reforms. According to another authority it was Sumana, a disciple of Udumbara was sent for religious reformation in his territory by Sri Dharmaraja of Chieng Mai. Fifty three years later, thirty one monks from Nabhisipura voyaged to Ceylon and studied there for six years. The monks were then

ordained at the Kalyani Mahavihara and on reaching the shore of Siam they toured through different monasteries and reached Nabbisipura in 1430 A. D. Theravadinism was already overburdened with Tantrism and the worship of spirits and ancestors by the Sinhalabhikkhus purged Theravadinism of this the excess of tantric Arism. No doubt tantric Buddhism preceded Theravadinism in Upper Burma from where a weak stream percolated to Haripunjaya. These Buddhist tantrics included the cult of the serpent in their religious programme to which Dipamkara Atisha of Bengal made an important contribution. We do not know if the grosser aspect of this esoteric Buddhism was traceable to a vastly learned and widely revered son of Bengal, but that its votaries lived an extra connubial life can be proved by the demand by Tantric monasteries for these articles from the peasantry of the neighbourhood, can be proved from the statement inscribed on Nandamanna stele. There are also executed in the temples at Min-nan-thu which were drawn sometimes after 1255 A. D. which depict besides the fight between the Prince of Evil and the erstwhile heir-apparent to Kapilavastu, but also portray four handed or six handed Avalokitesvaras closely embracing their saktis called "Taras." These secret practices required that the monasteries should be in the heart of forests away from the city. Probably the sect of the Aris or the Aranyakas was the more aggressive of the whole group. The monasteries of the north, like those of the south,

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began to collect an enormous number of Pali texts and commentaries from Sinhaladwipa and employed scholars to transcribe them into vernacular scripts. The reverence for Pali grew to such an extent that even local works in Buddha's own tongue came to be composed. One of these was the semi historical sketch "Jmakamalini" from the facile pen of Ratnapanna of the Rattavana Mahavihara at Chieng Mai.

From the above it must not be presumed that the Vedic religion was altogether snuffed out of Siam by the spread of Buddhism. It was contrary to the Aryan code to despise another cult. The description of the oppression of the Buddhists by a Hindu potentate or by the Brahmins, which travellers like I-tsing loves to dwell up should be accepted with caution. Saivaism or Vaishnavism were introduced when the Aryans first colonized. In Champa, for example, Saivaism has been deep-rooted for seven to eight hundred years when Buddhism made its debut. Yet from the very beginning a spirit of tolerance must have prevailed or the new creed could have never established itself. Such was the length to which this spirit could extend itself that the new cult combined readily with the old. This is indicated by the fact that two viharas and two temples were dedicated to Siva at Vo-Canh by a Buddhist. Chiefs like Lakshmindra Bhumiswami whose ardent devotion to Buddhism earned him the posthumous style of "Paramabuddhaloka" founded one shrine to Lokesvara

and one temple to Bhadresvara at the same time. Under the Khmers the same tolerance was maintained at Angkor region where a magnificent Vishnumurti still bears witness to it. This respectful indulgence was a legacy Cambodia inherited from Fou-nan. It is recorded that Sakya Nagasena, an eminent Buddhist who flourished at the end of the fifth century A. D. glorified the "god of gods". At the time when Dvaravati was part of Fou-nan, the images of Dvarapalas, Ardhanaris, Yakshas and Vishnus were probably taken direct from India. These have recently been excavated at P'ra Pat'om and Pong T'uk and constitute the evidences of the earliest specimens of sculpture in Siam. Probably these two town mark the region where the Aryans first colonized. Dvaravati remained essentially Hindu as long as Chaiya and Nakon Sri Thammarat continued to be the stronghold of Brahmanism. These foyers of Vedic thought also became the footholds of Buddhism according to an inscription in the fourth century A. D. If Harshavardhana could alternately worship Hindu deities and Buddha, it would not be astonishing that Dharmmaraja, Aryanised Thai ruler of Chieng Mai who invited Sumana, the pupil of the illustrated Udumbara to his court for reforming Buddhism in his principality should erect the murtis of Siva and Vishnu. In contemporary Sukhothai which was predominantly Hinayanist, Vaishnavic influence was still extant as indicated by the wheel and the fish motif on its ceramics.

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The sculpture of Siam, it is needless to repeat, was built around religion. Whether of Indian origin, Mon-Indian, Mon-Khmer, Khmer, Khmer-Thai, or of pure Thai source, only divinities or the symbolical representations of doctrines were sculptured ; in one word murtis always were chiselled so that the populace might adore and revere. We have already mentioned earliest specimens of Brahmanic idols ; and it was only when Dvaravati had seceded for some time from Fou-nan and Hinduism had been on the wave that the Gupta style was introduced.

Siam's sculpture, like all her cultural activities, it is needless to repeat, was undertaken from religious view point. Whether a figure was of purely Indian, Mon, Khmer or Thai origin, or it was a product of hybrid influence such as Mon-Indian, Mon-Khmer or Khmer-Thai, it was primarily executed for devotional purpose. In one word, murtis were created so that people might revere and adore. We have already mentioned of early specimens but we would like to describe in short some of the Brahmanic deities of different periods before we dive into Buddhist images which constitute the major bulk of Siamese sculpture.

The Ardhanarimurti to which we have referred above is undoubtedly a colonial effort. The feature is distinctly non-Aryan, though the idea emanated from the Indo-Gangetic plain. It has no crude reference to the Western Hermaphrodite conception which is essentially physiological. The Aryan thought springs from philosophical outlook of Prakriti and Purusha,



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**VISHNU (Stone)**

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that is to say, that nature by herself would be totally barren if the creative will of the Almighty were withdrawn. Or, it might have sprung from the Ayurvedic notion that male body had all the features of a female physique and that only some of them were talent and vice versa with women. The Ardhanarimurti under review was certainly of pre-Khmer period. The figure is broken and the ushnisa top with two palms is missing. What remains of the head gear is in three distinct tiers. The top one is encircled at its base by a narrow motif while the bottom one is finely ornamental. The ushnisa fits tightly leaving no trace of hair on the scalp. The forehead is broad and rectangular and temples are slightly sunk in. The eyes of the image are closed in the Dhyanī Buddha fashion and the lids droop heavily. The nose is straight but nostrils look rather large. The right cheek is slightly plumper than the left to indicate womanly grace and youthfulness. Over a short chin lips curl into an expression which is neither one of joy nor that of pain. They look, however, like those of a spoilt child pretending to weep at a moment's notice. Ears have the usual heavy rings which hang away from the cheeks at an acute angle and are too short to touch rounded shoulder tops. Both forearms wear ornament almost at a level with the shoulders. The necklace lies flat on the left side of the breast but rises as it passes above the over developed breast ( ? ) on the right. There were probably ornaments on the wrists but they are broken. Jewelled girdles in wide bands may be noticed below



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the navel pit but the evidence of cloth even on the lower portion of the image is almost nil. Legs which crossed in a mudrasana wear anklets which may also be interpreted as the hem of the apparel. The image is of stone but it is difficult to state with any precision the race responsible for its execution. It has a touch of the non-Aryan countenance and possesses none of the characteristics of the Dvaravati Gupta style. We have to content ourselves saying that it belongs to the pre-Khmer period of Siam.

The next figure on our list is a Vishnumurti from Chaiya probably erected during the Sri Vijaya regime. In every way this standing figure which has not escaped mutilation and breakage differs from the technique of Buddhamurtis in the same posture. Undoubtedly, the latter artists discovered the principle of weight-distribution which did away with the necessity of sideway props in the shape of flowing uttariya. The first thing to strike the eye is the ornamented head-gear of oblong shape. Barring its decorations, thin brim and tassels it could easily be mistaken for a modern top-hat. It covers the scalp of the murti in a manner as to exclude any sign of hair, not to speak of the curls seen on the head of a Buddha statue. Probably tassels help to secure the ushnisa tightly. These tassels which form one mass with the ear and the ring on it have their frayed ends dangling below the shoulder level. The rings, in comparison with those work generally by a Buddha-figure are small. The neck-band is thick and has a jewelled buckle in the middle.

It would be difficult to guess if there were before extra arms to meet the demand of Hindu iconology as the bulge on the left fore-arm seems to suggest. Both the fore and the lower arms are braceleted. The left lower arm which is held akimbo grips a conch but the right palm which is raised has no customary praharana of Vishnu. Probably it, too, is broken. There is a slight trace of a Yajnopavita crossing the chest diagonally. The upper body is conspicuous by the absence of garments, while the lower part is encased in a cloth worn in the dhoti style of fashionable Bengal of to-day. Though the hems are much above the ankles, the central portion sweeps the floor in pleats. If the nether apparel is held in position by a cummerbond we are still at sea regarding the semicircular piece which hangs like a garland from the waist band. The flowing cloth arrangement that is seen tucked up against the hip can hardly be explained. The prop on the right side, though broken, is not missing but part of the left one is missing. The countenance of the murti shows fine moulding, its expression being a tolerant smile. It has none of that flabbiness which Buddha murtis seldom lack.

Another Vishnumurti discovered at Vieng Sa which bears unmistakable stamp of the Khmer sculptor. The image rests against a stone block with two holes above the shoulders and two more showing the gap between the arm and the body. The ushnisa consists of three pot-like forms. The topmost one looks like a

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small lump almost negligible in comparison with the lower ones. The middle one has a tendency to decrease in dimension as it mounts high. The bottom one is semicircular and fits the skull closely. All are decorated with motifs and those over the brow have bead-like appearance. The eye brows are arched and eyes which are shut are slanting. The nose is short and stubby. The upper lip has indication of a moustache and the lower one being thick and dropping the smile is changed into a leer. The Chin is oval and cheek bones are not too prominent. Ears are, however, large and almost reach the bonnet edge. The rings are heavy and elongated as usual. The jewelled neck ornaments are spectacular and might have been considered too loud even in that remote age. The Yajnopovita follows the lissom contour of the body and finds its way back above the waist-band. There are four hands, the upper ones with a conch and a wheel respectively have their fingers raised upwards in Yangia mudra. Of the other two hands, one has the gesture of assurance and the fourth one is just placed against the nether garment. All hands wear bracelets. The lower apparel is in horizontal folds. On the whole there is a distinct impression of an emaciated physique and except for the upper extra hands with praharans, the murti might have been that of a standing Buddha.

We now come across a Siva murti discovered in the same Vieng Sa region. A Siamese scholar described the idol as that of Vishnu to us, but the

presence of snakes on the body, the third eye, the damaru ( the drum ) and the trishula leave us in no doubt as to its being an image of Siva. The figure is embossed on a slab and has worn out at places. There is no evidence of a head gear and a flowing jata is seen in its place. The back rests against two gadās (clubs) while the rear hands hold a drum and a trident respectively with raised fingers. We are not positive regarding the emblem the right forehand holds in its grip. The remaining hand holds apparently a bowl. Hands have bracelets of akshamala and a large Rudraksha hangs from the neck and reaches half way below the knee. A serpent in coil serves the purpose of a necklace, another that of the girdle and a third one forms an armlet on the left rear forearm. The image is nude and ornaments are also engraved around the ankles. The Vahana is probably a smiling lion with its tail curled up. The facial features are not distinctly Khmer or Mon. though undoubtedly mongoloid.

The next on our list is a fine bronze image of a personage with palms folded in prayers. It comes from Chieng Sen and is a marvellous product of the northern Thai. The Mukuta is of unique design with a screw patterned spike. It was undoubtedly that of a renowned warrior who sat as a model to the metal moulder. Deft fingers brought out in bold relief intricate designs which would demand not only patience but tax the utmost ingenuity of a modern art worker whom the present day tool industry has provided with

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special gadgets. The ornaments on the bronze figure look like an armour plate to which the flowing hems of the lower garment and further illusion of sword buckles. The palms are folded and the legs are clicked together in attention. The nether apparel seems to be wrapped too tightly to allow free movements.

Another bronze Vishnu of Sukhothai period deserves mention. The head gear is a cylinder placed on close-fitting skull cap. The features are purely Thaistic. The Kundals hang in screws touching the shoulder-top. In the Chieng Sen bronze figure referred to above, the transfferring the upper garment or jacket is denoted by the protuberance of the nipples which in this case are more prominent as no vest is shown. The broad armlets are worn in the fore arms but only thin ones appear on the lower ones. The main arms project upwards ; one of them holds the disc and the other, the conch. The extra arms branch out of the main ones at the elbow joints and not from the shoulder-blades or from forearms as may be seen in another Vishnumurti of the same period. The extra arms are held in Yangia mudras. In most of the Vishnu images of Siam only two of the praharanas are seen. The Yajnopovitas are sometimes very prominent. The folds of the nether garment spread side-wise like the fin of a deep sea fish and consist mostly of five pleats. The anklets are not generally worn but in some of the murtis they are rather prominent. The feet appear slightly oedematic and often are of

uncouth size. Small feet are rather rare. Eyes are closed and only way life is demonstrated is the serene flicker of a smile on the lips. Like all Thai mode figures the upper lip is depressed just under the nose. Like Sukhothai Buddha images, the bronze statues of Sukhothai possess womanly softness and feminine grace but no manly vigour is indicated.

The tendency of identifying Hindu gods with Sakyamuni is first observed among the Khmers of Java. The cult of Siva was probably introduced there by Agastya and his followers and the memory of this Aryan pioneer was kept green by transferring his personality as Guru or religious teacher to the doctrine he professed. This attempt is marked by the presence of Siva Guru murtis of Java. Later on while the Cambodians were busy transforming Hindu temples into Buddhist shrines and Brahmanic deities into Gautama, specially around Angkor, the Siva Buddha images had already made their appearance on the Javanese soil. A similar attitude of tolerance is noticed in some of the bronze Siva statues of Siam during the supremacy of Ayuthya. We have two Siva murtis, one representing a well knit slim and tall person and the other modelled from a squat and short human being verging towards obesity. Except for the presence of serpents in the form of armlets on the forearms and the third eye in the middle of the forehead and the absence of monastical mentle, very little is needed to transfigure them into standing Buddha images. Instead of a complete nether apparel

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which clothes the Buddha statues an elaborate loin cloth with fancy work secured to the waist by an equally ornamented cummerband is seen on these Sivas. The loin cloth suggests the garb of one destitute of worldly good as much as the third eye speaks of introspective power. The "enigmatic" smile of ageless wisdom of Buddha lips gives way to perfectly serene expression registered on these Maheswara countenances. The eyes do not droop but they are totally closed in meditation. The figures of uplifted palms no longer are tokens of assurance but they are twisted into Yapamudras. The holy chord on the Buddha figure, in Siva murtis has taken place by the serpent. What aided this close resemblance between Siva (or Vishnu in rare cases) and Buddha was the absence of extra arms and the weapons held by them, which was, of course, direct contravention of Hindu conception of their deities.

The beautiful story of the great Hindu epic Ramayana captured the imagination of the Siamese more than that of the Mahabharata. The incidents of Rama's life appealed to the Thai artist, which form the subject matters of a number of paintings. One of them displays Sita, accompanied by Trijata, one of the Chetis or Rakshasi-guard having a ride on the Puspaka chariot. Sita's fair complexion is indicated by blank space with inked lines showing her features while Trijata's dark skin is treated in the reverse way. Another portrays how Garuda in answer to Lakshmana's prayer releases the latter



VISHNU (Stone)

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**A DEITY (Bronze)**

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from the coils of serpents, an event which took place during Rama's fight with Ravana. A third one paints Indrajita almost flying off his mount the divine Airavata while he showers arrows at his enemy. The speed of the arrows and then the quickness of the warrior could not be more happily expressed than it has been on this picture. We have too little space here to devote to these beautiful masterpieces of Siam's paintings. Besides Canonical literature a vast deal of Aryan secular treatises were translated and adopted in different vernaculars. One example at least remains in Laos where five books of Panchatantram are still extant, but they are not exactly the same books. Some of them are called "pakon" more probably from Sanskrit "upakhyanam" than from "prakarana" as a French savant suggests. One of these stories are told about a bull called Nanda ; the next one relates to the incidents of frogs and a serpent : the third one deals with Pisachas or demons ; the fourth one is a story of birds while the fifth one is that of a conch or sankha. Besides these tales there is quite a number of fables and stories which were taken from various Indian sources but have been given local colours.

The hard materials like quartz could not be chisselled but "rubbed" into shape with special tools, but it soon became too difficult for the Mons of the Southern plain to handle the same. So they took to bluish green limestone which the Khmers their political successors again left alone in preference to

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laterite to which the Cambodians were more at home. But that did not altogether preclude the Khmers from using hard material like Rulite and an instance of this stone work is still extant. But it is too insignificant in comparison with the colossal quartz Buddha murti, thirty feet high, fashioned by the Mons. It was found at P'ra Pat'om detached in five pieces that could be socketed together. The use of sandstone by the Khmers probably began with Jayavarman II of Java.

The keynote to Aryan sculpture is tuned to the notion that an idol is a mere symbol of the Being that pervades and permeates the Macrocosm ; that in its tiny form it can only reflect infinitesimally a few of His eternal attributes ; that it should be able to awaken the spiritual interest of the votary and not his admiration for an artist's handicraft ; and that it should, therefore, possess certain peculiarities which the mortal model who helps the sculptor visualize the ultimate form of the image does not do. The reputed deification of a royal patron by setting up a devotional statue after his likeness is based on the fallacious assumption that the murti represents the monarch in his physical details. If it were possible now to compare the idol with a life-like portrait of the King we would have surely noticed dissimilarities intentionally effected. This basic idea must have been prevalent at the time of the Indian artist who introduced the Gupta model to Dvaravati. One of the figures extant of this early period is of red

sandstone which the Mon student of the Aryan sculptor did not employ, but he must have been profoundly interested in the abstract way his master created the Buddha figure. The Mon Indian never lost sight of the religious aspect of his art and concentrated on idealistic depiction of Tathagata in stone. He was guided by the same principle so long as he was allowed by the Khmer to collaborate. The Mon-Khmer partnership in sculpture may be said to have been liquidated when the Khmer turned to realism and left blue limestone for laterite and sandstone. The primitive Khmer art was cradled under the Founan regime and developed under its successor (?) Kambujadesha and the specimen of this art has been found in the two murties discovered at Sri Deva. This inclination for realism was deeply imbedded in the race, for the Khmer proceeding from Java, Sumatra and Malay under the banner of Jayavarman.....lost very little time to revert to realistic art on establishing himself in the lower Siam region. The Khmer's grip on his successor Thai was stronger and more enduring than his predecessor's hold on him but the Thai could be as realistic as he was idealistic and his production manifests a harmonious blend of both.

Were we to review figures of separate periods, we would be able to note the peculiarities of each age and what evolved from their application under new extraneous influences. The Gupta School has exerted itself in two respects ; the one is the ushnisa in the

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place of the traditional jata mukuta of the Hindu ascetic and the other is the treatment of drapery. The figure ascribed to Indian execution possesses curl of equal sizes arranged in tiers, which are almost obliterated on the protuberance at the middle of the skull. The boucles fall in cascades on either temple almost covering the ears. The spheroids of concentric rings representing hair in curls are continued by the early Mon-Indian before the bonnet makes its appearance. Curls cannot be physically conceived as showing on a head covered up to the brow with flaps falling across both ears. The little balls must then be taken for small tassels like the modern child's bonnet, and not be mistaken for boucles. The projection on the head top changes in shape and grows in size at a later period when the round balls change into lozenges of square shape. Those lozenges are arranged in parallel rows and belong to the head gear on a figure of the 6th-7th century found at P'ra Pat'om. The top, more compressed than those of succeeding epochs, has already taken the form of a pyramid, the motifs diminishing in size as the top is reached in stages. The pyramid shape of the head-wear is indulged in another figure of the Mon Khmer period where the boucles are dome shaped and are placed in graded rows. The top has now developed the motif of the lotus petals and the orientation of the whole head is artistic but inclines to be geometrical. The plasticity of art is almost lost. The pure Khmer ushnisa has a lace like border with indistin-

guishable curls and the top is more attenuated and has reached its penultimate stage. Where the Mon notion is uppermost, the curls, however small (almost like pin heads), are still there. From the 11th to the 13th century when Dvaravati is swallowed fully by the Khmers and the Mon influence is on the decline but has not altogether vanished, we find a number of murtis at Lopbouri, Pitsanulok and Sukhothai. Of these figures some wear a head-gear where the projection on the top is no longer square or dome-like, but is formed of concentric rings, which has almost the appearance of a spiked crown. This effect is strengthened by the jewelled band which covers the skull base up to the brow and the arrangement of hair is only limited to the narrow margin between the border of the ushnisa and the upper part of the brow. The ushnisa without a top is rare and occurs in a Khmer Thai figure of the 13th-14th century. The top is, of course, shown by microscopic elevation at the centre. The pyramid and the curly bonnet reappear under the Thai but the flame top from Ceylon, an instance of idealistic representation of sublime wisdom, swept the land with the prevalence of Mahayanism. The Thai has the queer trait of preserving all the past characteristics which he renovates and brings out in a refashioned style. The pin-head curls once more grow in size under him and the jata mukuta is revived after centuries. The knobby curls appear mostly in Sukhothai and Chieng Sen. The brow of the pure Indian murti is dome-shaped,

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but the forehead flattens under the Mon and the Khmer almost in parts to it slightly curved rectangular form but it again takes an arched form raised in the centre under the Thai. The eye brows of the Indian figure are fairly arched but lose their curvature under the Mon, become almost linear under the Khmer and return to almost semicircles under the Thai.

Open eyes signify the vivacity and life in statues. To them who are uninitiated in Eastern mysticism the semi closed eyes of the Dhyani Buddha murtis have to be explained. The lids are heavy and drooping and bulges in them indicate the position of eyeballs which are supposed to be focussed on the space between the eyebrows. This trance-feature has been handed to the Mon, the Khmer and the Thai by the Indian sculptor of Dvaravati ; it denotes that in meditation the mind is concentrated on the altered plane and therefore eyes do not possess any vision for things mundane. On rare occasions, the eyes of the Buddha in trance are wide open ; there is one such head preserved at U'tong which was executed during the Khmer Thai transition epoch. The iris, however, is directed towards the centre of the forehead where the nose begins as a sign of introspective mood. The normal elliptical shape of the Aryan eyes cannot be mistaken in the Indian Gupta, but it changes into sparrow-like form under the Mon. This is reduced to a slit under the Khmer where pupils can be hardly noticed. The Thai eyes are almond-



SIVA (Bronze)

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**VISHNU (Bronze)**

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like but they are not exaggeratedly Mongolian like those of the Mon.

The lifeless appearance of the Dhyani Buddha's countenance is belied by the traditional smile of the eternal knowledge which lights up the lips of the figure. This expression of ageless wisdom is an appanage which has its root in the early concept of a pacific mind in all conditions and environments ; it is not an outburst of vigorous laugh, nor it is an ambiguous approval of the high and mighty. It is full of sympathy and love for those who put up a grim fight against the pitfalls of Prince Mara, but bears no contempt for those who fail in the struggle through spiritual ignorance. If on the other hand, this transcendental smile is not compassionate and is devoid of encouragement, it must be put down to the incapacity of the sculptor whose racial temperament prevents him from imparting graceful expression of benignity to the figure he executed. The Mon-Indian lips lose the sensitive and delicate forms of the pure Aryan ; the lower one is thicker than the upper one and they touch each other at the ends. Only a slight parting in the middle is meant for achieving the effect produced by almost closed lips of the Indian Buddha head. The Mon-Indian of Lopburi translates this smile into an unconscious grin, but a stucco finished by the Mon-Indian in P'ra Pat'om, during the 6th-7th century bears an extremely sweet smile which its closed bulging eyes change into a mere flicker. The Mon lips are comparatively thin, and at the begin-

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ning of the Khmer domination they begin to get heavier. The upper one of the Khmer figures is almost straight and flat while the lower one is thicker. The latter, too, hands down, but not in such a pronounced manner as the Mon's. The Khmer mouth on account of straight aperture of its lips is almost sensuous and the smile registered by them is almost a hard-hearted sneer of a malevolent genius. So long the bluish limestone is used, the Mon influence alleviated to a certain degree the cruel look of the Khmer figure of Buddha. A bronze head of the Dhyani Buddha executed by the Khmer at Lopburi during the 12th-13th century has a peaceful look, but like one of the seated murti of the Mon-Khmer period a canopied image of the Khmer-Thai age has a dissipated look. The eyes in both these statues are totally closed or nearly closed and in conjunction with the inebriate the leer on tight lips they have an inebriated appearance of an evil soul cynically planning revenge. The canopy of hydra-headed serpent is undoubtedly a Khmer technique and therefore shows the vanquished still controlling the artistic effusion of the Thai. A seriousness of purposes is noted more and more as the Thai assumes the entire responsibility of Siamese sculpture. But the Thai evolves placidity of the Indian artist and the figidity of the Khmer figure which alters the head of the smiling Buddha into a death mask.

The jata mukuta of Buddha is incongruous as a jewelled crown on his head. The physical rigour of a

Hindu ascetic of which the jata is an inseparable part was proved by Sakyamuni as useless for the attainment of nirvana which could be realised by spiritual discipline alone. As Buddha relinquished all the pomp and vanity of the material world it would appear absurd to a true follower of Gautama's doctrines that the Amitava's statue should display any ornament. The monastic life Buddha led could not tolerate any tokens of material wealth. But the sculptors of all races whether Aryan, Negroid or Mongoloid have been at pains to invest their figures of Tathagata with Kundalas so heavy as to pull down the ear lobes towards either shoulder top. The Khmer as well as the Thai did stop at earrings but adorned the heads with diademed tiaras and some of the artists bestowed jewelled girdles on their figures.

The above is a mere rapid survey of a few image heads which may be taken to represent the major types found in the Thailand. Minor ones have to be left out for fear of over-crowding the main issue. These specimens have been sculptured at various epochs in different environments and by artists of several races. The anatomical details given above help us to identify the races of these sculptors, as much as the variation in their technique enables us to catalogue the figures according to the periods. The reason for the alteration in the style of execution may not only be explained by the difference in the temperament of the persons responsible for their creation but also

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by their reaction to extraneous canons of art imposed on them. The result of this stimulation has seldom been the slavish imitation of the original but has demonstrated itself in numerous modifications which can be explained by racial characteristics alone. Two principal currents of ancient civilisation have evidently contributed to the growth of the fine arts in the Thailand, but neither of them reached her shore at the same time or through the same channel. The one is Indian and the other Chinese. The former which predominated percolated into Siamese territory not by one route but by three, and these different routes were separated by time and space. Even the agencies which directed and controlled these routes were not composed of the same people, nor the source of their inspiration was identical. The Mongolian culture was, of course, limited in the course through which it permeated. It was either introduced by the Chinese themselves or by the people of Mongoloid origin like the Thais. It was confined chiefly to ceramics, lacquer work painting, gilding, ornamental motifs and wood carving. Their cultural efforts have always been secrets which the Chinese always guarded jealously and grudged their spread beyond the confines of China, but the Aryans have always been extremely catholic in disseminating their knowledge both sacred and secular. Hence in sculpture, architecture and other allied branches of art the Indian colonials had not only been liberal but took pains to teach them without reserve to

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racess less advanced. Divergent as these two main streams were, both in spirit and in quality, coalesce and accumulate they did in the Thailand and the genius of the Thai alone was accountable for their ultimate fusion. Some of the early characteristics may have been altogetner discarded ; some of them have been improved upon and retained while many racial eccentricities have been interwoven into the existing pattern with deftness and skill as to give birth to a new school which has been the Thailand's own distinct from all previous ones. Gaps there are, in spite of examples collected from intermediary ages which indicate the intervening space between two successive peoples ; whether these breaches are due to outside invasions, internal disruptions or owing to neglect by some inartistic rulers, it is difficult to suggest from want of sufficient data. Tropical climate has often hastened the decay first set in through the withdrawal of royal support or through acts of vandalism by marching enemy troops. Unless years of patient researches based on newly excavated materials and freshly discovered documents throw light on the obscure pages of the Siamese annals, these omissions will have to be made good by theorisation based on analogy. All the same, however clever the effort may be, it will be as little attractive as some brain-spun miasma deluding the public for the time-being.

The next set of characteristics in figures of Siam begins with their postures. Three postures are

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chiefly found in Buddha images. The seated, the standing and the walking Buddhas are variations of the same central theme, namely, that people desired to visualise their beloved Lord in his natural grace. The mudras, too, may be reckoned as three primary expressions of the Amitava. The Abhaya-mudra is the gesture of assurance which is illustrated by upturned palms. Sometimes one hand alone is raised and some times both are lifted to the level of the waist. The Bhumisparshamudra is rare ; it depicts the vow Gautama took by touching the earth with his fingers for freeing the world from the misery of rebirth. The third is perhaps the rarest. It is the Paryankasanamudra which shows Buddha in a half reclined position in the same fashion as that of Vishnu lying on a stretch of water while a hydra-headed snake towers over his head. The Vajrasana figures occur at Chieng Sen.

The treatment of drapery should come next ; it is a heritage of the Indian Gupta School but vastly improved upon by Dvaravati artists and their successors right up to the times of Sukhothai. It was no royal robe of Siddhartha but the monachal mantle of Sakyamuni. Generally it was displayed as having been tied at the neck ; one of its borders hanged in twofolds above the knees, the end of which rested in the arm held in akimbo fashion. Two other borders crossed the first ; these two also fell from either arms in pleats like a cascade hugging closely to the body. The transparency of the garb was often

emphasised by giving prominence to the contour of the legs from hips downward ; the effect produced by the outline of the body was that of wet cloth. Not only Dvaravati was strongly influenced by the Indian ideas of sculpture, even Haripunjaya imbibed them to a considerable extent, but their source of inspiration was not Dvaravati so much as that permeated through Pagan and reasons there are to believe that even the Pala Kings of Bengal had a share in this cultural flow from the Aryavarta. In some Buddha murtis a pleated scarf could be seen thrown across the shoulder reaching almost half way down the chest. A noticeable thing was the Yajnopavita running diagonally from under the armpit and losing itself under the scarf. We cannot say whether Buddha even gave up this emblem of Brahmanism or it was due to the Hindu influence of later days which never completely died out in the towns like Lopburi situated in the Lower Menan valley. The Padmasana or the seat among the petals of a full blown lotus is not seen to the same extent as in Java and Cambodia. We shall now deal with some of the well known centres of Buddhist culture separately along with architecture, some of which bear mute witness to the grandeur of the glories past.

Indian canons of architecture profoundly affected that of all Far Eastern countries, but all of them except Siam evolved their own particular style and technique. Thus the Javanese viharas while it magnifies the lower storeys almost neglects the top ones ; that of the



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Indo-Chinese countries assumes a pyramid top ; that of China and Japan retains nearly the same sized storeys imposed one upon the other ; while that of Burma takes fancy to rings of open parachutes of decreasing dimension. Curious as it may seem, Siam presents all these different types within her territory. She seems to be influenced only temporarily by one school and leaves abruptly one for another, a fact which makes her architecture historically more interesting than that of another. Even the Khmers of Siam appear to have imbibed this restless spirit of altering their racial marks in architecture. For example, when they began to dominate the Lower Menam Valley, the Khmer followed the traits of their Cambodian brethren. They employed that peculiar mortar to cement two layers of bricks and stones, which occupied no visible space in between. Their preference for laterite bases and brick walls can be seen in all edifices of the tenth and the eleventh centuries. But by the beginning of the twelfth, they became more proficient in the use of stones and therefore employed less bricks. The mortar they used became more perceptible and masonry started being covered with plaster on which decorations were moulded or engraved. The Cambodians do not, however, change their technique nor their material. Their prasats which constitute the avant corps of the central stupa have false doors at the sides and at the rear whereas the main entrance at the front is coveted by an elaborate porch looking almost like another little hall. But

wood comes to the aid of the Siamese Khmers who no longer attempt to fashion their edifices like the stupa at P'imai, the Wat Mahathat at Lopburi and the sancturay of Chulamani. The disappearance of the windows, then the naves, the vestibules with doors at their side, and finally the entrance hall with its porch, is gradual and each stage marks a period. The hall at the near slowly changes as bays vanish with their oriented doors which allow no access. There are many details which mark the transformation of one school but seldom there are instances in Siam which would indicate one school of architecture merging into another forming a third one. The Cambodian Prasat is generally a brick building with three naves, erected in front of the main stupa. Only the door in the front gives access to the sanctuary behind while other doors at the sides or at the rear are built for show and harmony. Sometimes a porch intervened between the Prasat and the main building. This prasat which in reality may be treated as a hall for fathering is only seen in the early Khmer architecture of Siam but as the Cambodian influence declines it also disappears gradually. It is possible that wooden structures for worshippers to assemble used to be constructed but they were not renewed once they decayed except on rare occasions where they were made of more durable material like stone. It is extremely difficult to surmise what influences contributed actually towards the evolution of the Siamese architecture during transition periods. While it is

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not possible to attribute causes to certain stages in the evolution of Khmer Thai architecture, it is puzzling to note that the Cambodian peculiarities at the height of the afflorescence of Khmer art differed in essential points from that of the Siamese Khmers. The Poang may not be a direct product of the Khmer Prasat, but one can hardly say from what it really resulted.

The earliest paleographic evidences for which the Khmers were responsible have been found at Lopburi. One of these establishes the fact that the Mons of the Lower Menam Valley were ousted from Dvaravati by Suryavarman I (1002—1049 A.D.) According to the chronicle *Camadevivamsa*, this prince belonged to the house of Sri Thammarat of Nakon. Probably it was from Nakon that Suryavarman I's father controlled the destiny of the Sri Vijaya Khmer Kingdom of Palembang in Sumatra. That this new comer was a Buddhist (of the Mahayana School) can be gathered from his title "Paramanivanapada". This accounts for the difference in architectural and sculptural style between the Khmers of Siam and the Khmers of Cambodia.

To realise the true significance of Siam's sculpture it is essential to study the same against its architectural background or one would fail to appreciate the enormity of some of the ancient undertakings and gauge properly causes responsible for characteristics developed locally. Detached from their original home and carted miles away to museums for preservation and future references,



**SIVA (Bronze)**

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**VISHNU (Bronze)**

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the relics excavated from among the ruins of yore, become only objects of art and curiosity. They fail to contact with legends and traditions with which the main body were connected and much of their charm is lost when they cease to be venerated as holy things. Cataloguing and indexing them for facilitating the researches of a historian can no doubt be best performed in institutes specially built for housing them but wherever it is possible, ancient monuments should be repaired and rebuilt according to the old plan and design so that they would once more be able to give us the correct interpretation of the motives of their founders. It is, of course, a tall order which would entail heavy financial support from the State but in the circumstances those who wish to forge anew the lost links like those of Siam's past history ought to visit towns where monuments still stand intact as mute witnesses to her erstwhile glory and inspect the sites where among the debris relics are being collected piecemeal. Systematic work by careful investigators has been happily started but whether they can be continued in future owing to the after effects of the present world wide crisis is doubtful. Owing to inclemency of rainy seasons annually much time is lost and reweeding is often necessary before the next session can begin. Still there is much to be gained by travelling from one old city to another and the transport system is fast improving. From Nakon Sri Thammarat which lies in the mid-coastal line of the peninsular projec-

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tion of Siam to Chieng Sen which forms one of the northernmost outposts of the Thailand, a chain of cities will be found most of which cluster around the rice districts of the fertile valley of the Menam and her tributaries. This chain may be said to represent the cultural backbone of the Thailand and many of the towns still proclaim the aesthetic conception of their founders whose very names are to-day obliterated by the legends and fables of hoary antiquity. A few of the old towns are to-day abandoned or reduced to mere hamlets overgrown and overshadowed by tropical forests, but many of them are easily accessible and are still centres of political and economic activities.

Thus NAKON SRI THAMMARAT (Dhammarat) is at present the chief town of a province and the hills of Prong and Luang still secure it against land invasions. It lies about seven miles and a half from the shore and old city walls which exist to this day enclose a rectangular area of fertile land covering 39 square miles. Apparently its position has been responsible for its having been one of the strongholds of early Brahmanism which probably flourished vigorously under Fou-nan and Kambujadesha and continued to maintain a dignified, if feeble, course under Sri Vijaya and Sukothai. Owing to its importance as a terminus for the transpeninsular channel of Aryan Civilisation, it is often mentioned in the Middle Ages and the names abbreviated by those who visited its hospitable soil in the past were

Lakhon (Nakhon) and Ligor. From an inscription discovered at Chaiya we learn that one prince whose Buddhist creed earned him the title of Dharmmaraja contributed a good deal towards its prosperity, if not actually founded it. The prince was a vassal to Sri Vijaya and his state of Tamralinga was recorded by the Chinese as Ton-ma-ling which extended from one coast to the other. Even if this Dharmmaraja founded the city that exists to-day, its nucleus must have been implanted when the Aryans first colonised at the beginning of the Christian Era. A small group of temples, almost insignificant in comparison with Buddhist stupas, is seen in their midst and is all that remains of ancient Brahmanism. In one of these little edifices a Nataraja murti of bronze stands with Siva's consort Uma and his son Ganesha. Further to the north in another small mandira houses an image of Vishnu and the absence of the third member of the Hindu Trinity, namely of Brahma, is conspicuous. It is possible that the passage of time has obliterated the vestige of such a murti, specially so, when Hinduism died out and Buddhism converted the majority to its doctrine. The local Wat Pra That is the most attractive of all monuments found at Nakon Sri Thammarat. In its style it resembles that of Petchaburi, P'ra Pat'om and Chiang Mai, but in size it is reduced. The whole structure bears the indelible stamp of early colonial art of the Aryans and as such its likeness to Cham buildings at Dong Duong in Mi-Son and to Indo-Javanese temple of Chandi Kalasam. The stupa is



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spherical in shape which diminishes in size as it mounts higher and higher. The whole edifice has a solid base on the outerwalls of which riches alternate with projected motifs. The vihara in the north contains a flight of steps leading to balconies where offerings are made to the Blessed One. Small stupas are arranged around a rectangular courtyard while a gallery runs parallel to it.

Close to Nakon Sri Thammarat, on a tributary of the Bandon, stands what remains of VIENG SA once flourishing town and stronghold of Hinduism. It attracted the attention of histriologists at the beginning of the present century when the Vishnu-murti described elsewhere was discovered. An enclosed area of about two square miles or more marks the site of this town and a small shrine of brick is still discerned. The importance of this decadent town increased in recent years when a stone of roughly oblong shape came to light, which supplied a few of the missing links of the history of an erstwhile powerful and extensive kingdom called Sri-Vijaya where monarchs were known in the contemporaneous world as "Maharajas". Its extent can be gathered from the fact that another link of the chain lies at Banka. The width of the stele diminishes as we reach its bottom. Its top-edge is rounded at corners and has a slight peak in the middle looking like the mathematical sign of a bracket. The inscription is in Sanskrit which continues to its reverse side which, however, has been left incom-



**GARUDA RELEASING LAKSHMANA FROM NAGAPASHA**

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INDRAJIT ON AIRAVATA

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plete. The linguistic style is that of the Javanese inscriptions of the 7th—8th centuries and its date, too, probably the same. The prasasti has the usual exaggerations and hyperboles which certainly speak of the intimate knowledge of Sanskrit literature. References to the Himalaya, to astronomical phenomena and names of planets to Hindu cosmology, to Buddhist theology, to the Nagas and the Ocean, all indicate the touch of a literary man. The occasion for the inscription was the finishing of three stupas by the Sthavira Adhimukti, a disciple of the royal chaplain Jayanta who began the erection at the command of the monarch for whom the eulogy was meant. The date of the inscription in 775 A. D. and the day was the 11th of the month of Madhava and the tithi was Shuklapanchami. The King came of the Sailendra family and he was described as having been rendered imperishable (immortal) by his prudence, modesty, knowledge, equanimity, patience, courage, majesty, intelligence, piety and other qualities. The stupas were made of bricks and the hilly environment added gravity and grandeur to the devotional place. The spirit of tolerance is finely manifest by reverence paid to the Jina of all the Jinas and to Vishnu. If Lakshmi or Sri was extolled, the dislike for Mara was also displayed. The aesthetic taste was not absent as flowers like the Kesara, the month of Madhava (Vaisakh) and the season like Spring found their places in the composition. That a draught animal would love to sport in water during hot

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months was not unknown to the writer. In a word, the inscription is remarkable evidence of the civilised condition of Sri-Vijaya.

CHAIYA is situated to the north of Nakon Sri Thammarat and occupies the region to the south of the Bay of Bandon. A state of the same name existed and like the southern state was a tributary to Fou-nan, Kambujadesha, Sri-Vijaya and Sukhathai. There are traces of Brahmanic creed and influences of Champa and Sumatra are noticed in its architecture. All that might be termed Khmer was probably introduced when the Sri-Vijaya chiefs of Sumatra extended themselves to the whole of the Malay Peninsula. The vassal state of Chaiya included Grahi which the Chinese transliterated as Kia-lo-ki and its economic prosperity must have varied with the political paramountcy of different kingdoms over it. This is borne out by variations in the rigid rules of Aryan Silpasastra. The local Wat Pra That which was restored and extended was a shrine of three storeys resting on the square block with smaller edifices at each corner. In 1928 it was struck down by lightning and only three broken Buddha images are to be seen to-day. The whole construction presents the singular technique of Cham building art. The layers of bricks are heaped one upon another without any visible cement or mortar. It is surmised that some sort of rice or vegetable glue was spread over each layer of bricks mixed with powdered clay which was kneaded into a uniform paste which added little to the

thickness of the intervening space. The brick stuccos which are noticed in the Wat Kien might be the additions of a later period made during repair work. This change of style during restoration of old monuments is observed even in northern towns like Chiang Mai. The Vihara in the east contains some valuable relics of the Dvaravati Gupta Sculpture ; with a jewelled motif peculiar to the Dvaravati epoch ; by its side a headless figure stands which is dressed in the Gupta fashion. A standing Vishnu image is discovered in the neighbourhood, the head of which possesses an ornamental mukuta and the four hands of which bear characteristic arms.

Chaiya presents one novel feature in architecture which is only comparable to porcelain wares of Savan-kalok. Indian canons of sculpture and architecture are adhered to in main but their modifications possess unmistakably the graceful poise of the Chinese. The style is old but during periodic restoration and repairs the Chinese itinerant masons must have put their left fingers in retouching and redecorating the ancient edifices. Their hand is unmistakable in the stuccos of the Wat Palalai where little gods and goddesses seem to have come direct from a Chinese stage wearing the Mongolian costumes. They would appear a little out of place against the purely Indian background but the whole has been blended with perfect harmony of a master artist who has left alone the beautiful border of the pedestal, a piece of work which strictly conforms to the hard and fast rules of the

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Aryan science of architecture. Again the base of the central portion of the stupa rests on legs fashioned in Chinese mode while the pediment of the forepart is purely Indian in execution. The stupa top shows the oft repeated and almost stereotyped annular top tapering at the pinnacle, a style which is peculiar to Buddhist architecture in Siam. The old bricks have been used in building balconies. The Indian canon is marked once more in the images which always face the east. There is an image in the Wat Prasop which is made partly of masonry and partly of gilded wood, a practice which strangely reminds one of the crowned figures of Ayuthya.

The votive tablets of the Peninsular projection were preceded by those of P'ra Pat'om and dated from the 10th century. They were entirely of Buddhist origin as the Brahmins never made any use of the same. Made of rough and coarse clay, and round in shape, these bore images of Buddhas and Bodhisathvas and Buddhist mantras inscribed on them. From differences in formulae and figures the age of these tablets are determined.

At Vieng Hua Vieng was discovered a few years back a rectangular upright which was sent to the National Library at Bangkok for better preservation. It bears an inscription in ungrammatical Sanskrit which affords us only a glimpse of Chaiya in the third decade of the thirteenth century A. D. The long exposure to the inclemency of the tropical climate has obliterated a few lines at the bottom of the inscrip-

tion which would have probably explained to us the occasion on which the stele was erected. But miraculously enough the date of the engraving has escaped the ravages of time. Even then, it is not easy to interpret certain terms contained therein, though inferences made from the context would help us to forge an important link in the history of the mighty empire of Sri-Vijaya. The lines refer to a 'King Sri Dharmmaraja' who was also the lord of 'Tambralinga'. In all probability, the term 'Sri Dharmmaraja' was the chief's customary title, in which case he would be identical with the Prince of Nakon Sri Thammarat of the day. 'Tambralinga' was the prakritised form of 'Tamralinga' (Copper Phalus : probably a Sivamurti of bronze once existed at the site) which the Chinese transliterated into 'Tan-ma-ling'. The latter place was, according to one record, at a distance of ten days' voyage from the south coast of Cambodia. Chao-Jou-Koua's itinerary mentions 'Tan-ma-ling' lying at a distance of six days' boat-journey from Lankasuka. If we suppose that the little state of Tamralinga extended from coast to coast occupying a considerable breadth of the Malay peninsula, all apparent indiscrepancies would vanish. The state of Tamralinga included in any case, for the time being at least, both Chaiya and Nakon Sri Thammarat. If we agree with certain scholars that Chaiya was an abbreviation of Sri-Vijaya, we may suppose that the city port once served as one of the chief centres of administration of the huge island empire



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of Sri-Vijaya, the capital of which was on the same site as that of the present Palembang in Sumatra.

After invoking benediction, the inscription states that a King Sri Dharmmaraja, lord of Tambralinga procuring extreme felicity to the religion of Buddha... having for origin that lamp which is the family of those that propagate the Family of Lotus, his (physical) form resembling (that of) Cupid, possessing the brilliance of the Moon, politically capable like Dharmmasoka, chief of the family of five..... Blessings ! Fortune ! He was a royal support of the Family of the Lotus, Lord of Tambralinga of powerful arms, by the strength of his good deeds with respect to all men (having) in some manner the puissance of the Sun...(and) the brilliance of the Moon, (being) the repository of his illustrious glory in the world, the King Sri Dharmmaraja. The lines following are much too worn out to venture any reading except for the ambiguous date Kaliyuga 4332 which may be tentatively equated to 1230 A. D. From the general religious trend that pervades the whole inscription, the stone may be taken to be a corner or a commemorative tablet for some pious undertaking of the ruler of 'Tambralinga' wherein an effort has been made to connect him and his house with that of Emperor Asoka whose missionary activities ages could hardly efface from the memory of the Buddhist world.

Still more curious are five lines in pure Khmer engraved on the pedestal of a gilded Buddhamurti found in the Hua Vieng Wat of Chaiya. The Buddha

is seated on a decorated cushion placed on the tail of a hydra-headed snake. The tail is thrice coiled with a flowery motif at the middle of each of the two lower layers. The seat itself is finely ornamented with floral design at the centre and with hoods of two snakes at either end. The back of the Buddha rests against a canopy of seven snake-heads wearing jewels spread fan-wise. There is a curious orientation on the central hood which almost looks like a projected ushnisha. Hair-curls are distinct and the forehead is wide but narrow. The eyes are apparently closed while the nose is straight though comparatively short. Ears are wearing customary rings which are long but not enough to touch the shoulder-tops. Lips wear the peculiar smile, cheeks are youthful while the chin is rather short. The neck wears ornaments in two tiers at the base. Across the right shoulder a pleated scarf of the right arm is held above the wrist. The hand touches the foot but the palm is doing the *japa*. The left hand is touching the earth signifying the *Bhumisparsamudra*. The whole posture of the seated murti is that of the *paryankasanam*. Though decorations and the serpent motif point to the Khmer influence on the sculptor of the murti, yet the slenderness of the body, the closeness of the countenance and the firmness of the features, however, suggest the southern origin of the statue. What has been puzzling the various savants is the state of *Grahi* mentioned in the inscription. Probably it refers to the site where *Chaiya* stood in

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the olden days. The language is old Khmer and the scripts employed resemble the Kavi of Java. The year of the inscription cannot be ascertained, but the "Maharaja" mentioned in the inscription does not belong to the known list of Cambodian rulers. This induces certain scholars to infer that the name belonged to one of the rulers of the Palembang Khmer family, whose customary style was "Maharaja". The manner in which the year of erection is given is certainly more Thaistic than Khmeric, but the southern portion of the Peninsula came under the Thai dominance long afterwards at the time of Ram Kamhaeng. The inscription states that "in Saka..... year of the Hare, by the order of Kamraten An Maharaja Srimat Thrailokyarajamauti-Bhusanavar-madeva, on the tritua, the moon crossing the Jyestha (star), Wednesday the Mahasenapati Galanai who governs the land of Grahi invited Mraten Sri Nano to execute the statue. The weight of the Samrit is one bhar and two tolubs and the value of gold (in plating) was ten tamlin. This image is erected so that the faithful might rejoice and (through) venerating and adoring the same here...obtain omniscience...

The city of PETCHABURI stands on a river which rises from the south and crosses the railway lines at the site of the city falling into the Gulf at a little distance to the north. On either bank of the little river are dwelling houses which lie snugly in the midst of old stupas and viharas. The southern aspect of the town is interesting by a long wall of early days

which also enclose the other sides except the one where the river forms a barrier. There are chalk hills and caves in them contain figures of the Lord. The first reference to Petchaburi occurs in King Ram Kamhaeng's inscription but evidences there are to prove the existence prior to the paleographic note of the Sukhothai ruler. Though the Thai influence predominates yet the tokens of the Dvaravati epoch are not lacking. A beautiful image of Amitava, about 58 inches high, was discovered in the Wat Tham Krap which distinctly bore the characteristics of the Dvaravati Gupta School. The hair of the image is tied up, its eyes are downcast while the monk's mantel is tied at the neck with the short end falling in folds around its knees in the veritable manner of Amaravati. The drapery covering the lower portion of the image is marked incisively across which the girdle is flung. The figure is slightly flabby. There is a ushnisa covering partly large curls of hair and ending in a cave at the top. There are at least three other heads which may have belonged to the Mon-Indian period but most of the rest is undoubtedly of the Khmer School in style. Small laterite buildings are seen enclosed in a rectangular courtyard at the Wat Kampheng Leng. They were probably constructed for Bramhanic deities but were gradually converted to Buddhist devatas during the Thai domination.

On the Mekong stands in the midst of rich rice regions RATBURI, one of the oldest towns of Siam.

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It must have been considerably important in the sixth century A.D. when the image of the Enlightened One, seated in European fashion was executed in the Dvaravati-Gupta style by one Samadhigupta. A similar pose is observed in one of the figures curved on the rocky wall of natural grotto formed in a chalk hill, five miles to the north of Ratburi. Its solitude must have attracted the peace-loving Buddhists at a time when the town was a mere straggling hamlet. This murti with its legs dangling has the palm of a hand raised in a gesture of assurance. Apparently the Wats of old never suffered a break in their religious dispensation due to political changes in the land. Whether the Mons founded a monastery or not, its upkeep, repairs and alterations were carried on by the Khmers and the Thais and unless the funds ran short or there was a definite substitution of one creed by another no religious establishment was allowed to fall into decay. Additions and innovations were included in their ordinary programme and the latest style in architecture and sculpture was given preference to the old design. Thus the Wat Pra That of Ratburi, primarily a Mon edifice was replaced by a Khmer tower during the Sri-Vijaya domination of the Lower Menam Valley. The three ledged base of the main building was made of laterite which the Khmer always could handle better than the grey limestone the Mons invariably employed. The rest of the building is made of burnt clay bricks covered with plaster, which displays definitely another Khmer

technique, while the frescoes on inside walls show the hand of a Thai artist. Both Stuccos over the false doors and mural paintings portray the incidents of the Jatakas. Stuccos are in a fine state of preservation but of the pradakshinapatha which ran round the stupa only the vestiges remain.

The Khmers of the south professed Mahayanism like the Mons whom they dispossessed of the Lower Menam Valley and some of the puissant monarchs like Suryavarman I and Jayavarman VII were its staunch supporters. Its dogmas were written in Sanskrit instead of Pali but its literalism was most marked. For, Siva and Buddha often changed places in devotional institutions which caused little sectarian friction. Instances of this catholicity are not wanting in Sumatra, Java and Siam. Religious and cultural inspiration from northern India followed mostly the route of three pagodas and the transpeninsular channel. Moreover, the Mon-Indian School responsible for the evolution of the Dvaravati Gupta style greatly influenced the Khmers who literally dotted the Khorat Valley with their creation. The symbolic representation of Buddhist doctrines was a pre-Gandharian concept. It loved to depict the first Sermon the Blessed One delivered at the Deer Park of Benares by sculpturing the wheels of the Law and gazelles—and it is this portraiture which leads us to believe that the temple at Pra Pat'om was Buddhist in origin. The original edifice was erected by the Mons but was replaced later on by a Khmer monument

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which, too, was in a sad state of disrepairs in 1854 when the King Mongkut wished to raise a structure 262 feet in diameter, 393 in height and 787 in width. The town of Pra Pat'om itself must have existed in the 4th century A. D. ; the votive tablets of this period bearing images of the Dvaravati mode have been brought to light. The Amaravati style is also seen in the treatment of the mantle of renunciation worn by one of the images preserved in one of the local wats.

Such a figure has also been discovered in AYUTHYA, the "impregnable" capital founded by an unnamed prince of U'tong in 1349 A. D. The immediate reason why the Prince who later on assumed the title of King Ramadhibodhi I deserted his old capital was an epidemic which threatened to wipe out the entire population of U' tong. But for a seat of his government he could not have made a happier choice than Ayuthya which lay detached from the rest of the land by having been situated on the delta of the Nam Sak where it joined the Menam. The new capital was, therefore, comparatively immune to attack by land and since the days of King Mahasakrapat a wall, 16 feet thick, 20 feet high with 21 built in bastions to defend the canalised channels of the tributary encircled it. Moreover, the more centralised position of Ayuthya enabled the first Ramadhibodhi to consolidate his kingdom by annexing Khmer state of Lavo to Sukhothai. The river Menam has always been navigable and the sea-going crafts of those days could easily sail up to the capital

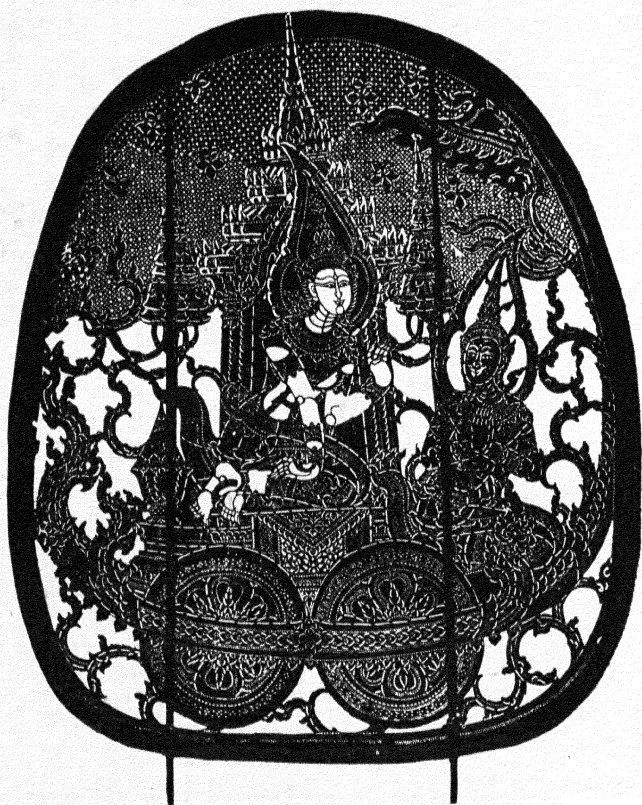


LAKSHMANA and SUGRIVA

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SITA AND TRIJATA ON PUSHPAKARATHA

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of Siam. Ayuthya soon grew into an important land port where according to Gervaise in 1690 "all the shipping put in". This accessibility tends to support the surmise of some erudite scholar who wishes to identify tentatively Ayuthya with the old Mon capital which need not have been a maritime town in order to be the landing stage of foreign sea-borne merchandise. In the 17th century Ayuthya attracted not only tenders from the East but from the West who had their quarters in the southern section of the town where the royal palace stood.

The Wat Sri Sarpet occupied the area to the south of the palace ; its main building was composed of three great brick stupas spreading from the east to the west with a small chamber built right in front of them, The three stupas were constructed on a terrace extending to the east where the ruins of several viharas are still found. The Central stupa was erected in 1492 so that the ashes of the King Paramatrailokanath could be preserved. Probably to guard against the profanation of the royal ashes a small stupa with false doors was first built before the main edifice covering the whole was undertaken. The autargriha of this type is not a rare thing but is seen elsewhere too ; for example, the Wat Paya Nang of Savankalok has a similar brick "heart" built in it.

The Chapel of Wat Pra Na Men is situated on the opposite bank and therefore to the north of the royal palace. This little Wat houses one of the gigantic images of Buddha seated on a throne with legs hang-

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ing down. The style of execution places it in the Mon-Indian period of Siamese sculpture, and the workmanship of the throne is really very remarkable. The throne has beside it two walking figures, found in the neighbourhood. One of these standing figures measures nearly six feet and the other five feet and a half. Both bear the workmanship of the Dvaravati School. There is a head the trunk of which is lost which is unmistakably of the Saranath or the Mathura style. Of innumerable public monuments the Wat Phanan Cho'ng deserves mention because of the colossal image of the happy one erected during the rule of Narasuen which still attracts the Chinese followers of the Lord Buddha. The Wat Chai Mongkhon is noted owing to the fact that it was built by the founder of Ayuthya for housing the "Sinhala Bhikhus". The stupa was added by the King Narasuen for commemorating his victory over the Burmese under Bureng Naung who had already set up the Phu Khas Thong as a mark of his success over the Siamese in 1569 A. D. The repairs of this monument were undertaken by Bromokot in the 18th century.

The French School holds that Ayuthya has no pretence to be called an ancient Mon town and that the attempt to identify it with Dvaravati would be going against the position of the Mon capital given by Ywen Chevang. It holds that Ayuthya "has simply picked up the tradition of a more ancient capital, Lov or Lavo, at present LOPBURI (Sanskrit Lavapuri, the

Lavapuri, the town of a Lav) about 45 KM. north of Ayuthya (Ayodhya). This ancient city stands on a river of the same name near a chalky escarpment, the P'ra Puttabat. A Mon princess of this city established the capital of another principality called Haripunjaya by the middle of the seventh century. For three hundred years from the tenth to the thirteenth century it maintained itself as the seat of Khmer provincial authority. During the twelfth century at least, the Lower Menam Valley which the Khmers wrested from the Mons, both Lavo and Sukhothai acknowledge the paramountcy of Cambodia. According to paleographical evidences discovered at Angkor Wat troops of Suryavarman II whose title was Paramavishnu were recruited both from Lavo and Syam Kut (the Sukhothai principality) Lopburi declined when Sri Indraditya, the Thai chieftain overthrew the Khmers of Sukhothai. From the time of P'ra Ruang to that of P'ra Narai's predecessor, the Khmer places of worship at Lopburi were exposed to the rapacity of treasure hunters, the marks of whose vandalism are still extant. A new epoch in architecture distinct from that of the Khmer's as ushered in Lopburi when P'ra Itarai in the 18th century decided to rebuild the town as his summer residence during peaceful days and fortify it as an emergency capital in case the "Impregnable" Ayuthya was invaded. In this work of reconstruction he was helped by a Greek adventurer, Constance Phaulkon. This Westerner who was French by inclination and an

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adroit courtier by nature provided the old town with a new citadel, a royal palace, an outer wall and a water system. His genius won him the title of P'ya Wicayen, and the ruins of his own dwelling built in the style of the grand monarch of France still attests to it. The town of Lopburi continued to flourish so long Ayuthya remained the capital but was once more allowed to fall into decay when the seat of the Central Siamese authority was shifted to Bangkok.

The traces of both the Khmer and the Thai periods are still seen. The Wat Mahathat was a Khmer creation and now only its ruins remain. From its debris numerous statues of the Tathagata with a canopy of the hydra-headed serpent have been recovered and preserved in the local museum. The Central prang was surrounded by a series of smaller brick edifices set up without any plan. The main building itself is of laterite covered with five stuccos and has doors on either side of the building projected from the front. The receding angles of the upper stories are detached from the main building and have lovely decorated lintels. The small buildings which are built around the main stupa display a line of beautifully fashioned stuccos. P'ra Marai built a great Vihara in the east, encircled by a rectangular gallery of which only the lower portion constructed with bricks remains to-day.

A shed with a corrugated roof marks the edifice that once embellished San Sung. It sheltered a great image of Vishnu resting on a large Patarite base.

Perhaps it was a common place substitute of another image of much more finely executed, which is now seen at Ayuthya. Architecturally the place is devoid of interest, but historically its importance lies in the fact that the image as well as the original building dates back to the time of the Mon inscription discovered in its neighbourhood. The inscription has found its way to the Bangkok Museum. The Wat S'ak shows different hands at the different periods. There are besides a few heads which are undoubtedly of Thai workmanship, a number of Danavamurtis and Devata images which were executed during a period when the art of Angkor Wat was predominant.

Not only did the Aryans colonize maritime districts but from early times penetrated deep into countries in the Far East and opened up areas miles away from the sea-shore. One such place was SRI DEVA, the ruins of which lie to-day close to Petchabury buried in the dense forest of Central Siam. These relics attest to the infiltration of Hindu thoughts and culture of the contemporaneous periods of India, some relating to the Guptas of Northern India and others to the Pallavas of the South. The town of Sri Deva probably constituted the capital to one of the vassal states to Fou-nan and a high embankment still marks the encircling city-wall of yore. The small temple built in the style of North Indian places of devotion during the fifth and the sixth centuries probably marks the centre of this ancient metropolis. That it was of Brahmanistic origin is borne out by paleo-

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graphical and iconographical evidences excavated at sites near-by.

The inscribed stone is of a peculiar shape. As it exists to-day, it is a slab fashioned into a pyramid at the top having a wedge-like bottom. Only six disconnected lines constitute all that is left of inscribed matter. They are too disjointed to make any sense ; we cannot infer, for instance, to whom the laws were told (first line), what the sage Veda-vyasa had to do with it (the second line), whether it was the "Kaniaries" who knew all (that was) to be enjoined (the third line), who the best King performing pious acts was (the fifth line) and finally who the two Suras (gods) were, valiant, truthful and kind as they were described to to be (the sixth line). The fourth line is too vague and allusive. The characters inscribed suggest the date of the engraving was the fifth century A. D. That it was not a Mukhalinga but a foundation stone need not be doubted. It must be, however, regarded as one of the oldest mile-mark in the history of the cultural expansion of the Aryans, the earliest being those of Bhadravarman I at Vo-Canh. The murti certainly proclaims the close relation of Sri Deva and Amara-vati. Perhaps they were the oldest tokens of the Gupta art in the Indo-Chinese peninsula. Like the inscription the murtis are not intact either, but they show the master-artist who could not only handle his tools with graceful flexibility but he could also afford to be simple in his designs without the

images executed by him losing their natural poise. What was more, he mastered the science of distributing weights or he could have hardly fashioned such a fine traditional "tribhanga" posture indicated by a raised forearm and a bent knee. The arrangement of curly coiffure in a perruke style is distinctly a Gupta trait. The thickness of the neck and the shoulder points to the Khmer origin of the artist. It was perhaps the beginning of that realism in sculpture that the Khmer developed to such a perfection at a later period, say, between the 10th and the 13th centuries. This realism in Champa almost reached its zenith, where they even attempted to reproduce the breathing of the living model, and set definitely back the tendency of the idealist school to exaggerate the underlying thought by deforming anatomical details.

About 132 miles to the north of Lopburi, on either bank of the Menam Man rests the little town of PITSANULOK. Song Kuhe or turn arms was its ancient name before the Khmers occupied the Menam region. The present importance of the town lies in the style and the technique of certain shrines built during the Khmer Thai transition period. They really mark a curious chapter in the history of architecture of Siam, in the sense that these differ in essential features from those of contemporary Cambodia. To dwell upon the theme whether or not the Siamese prang evolved from the Khmer prasat would be speculation beyond our scope, but it would be interesting to trace how these differences in the Siamese art of



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building came to arise. Architectural evidences only lay stress on these peculiarities, but historical facts have yet to be unearthed which would give a clue to the source of inspiration. The vihara of Chulamani, according to the inscription left by P'ra Marai, was founded by Paramatrailokanatha i.e towards the middle of the fifteenth century when Cambodian architecture had already attained a glorious height. Set the use of brick combined with small sized laterite pieces and covering them with plaster cannot be said to be entirely Khmeric in technique. The main building which was of bricks and the half of which has now gutted was a square redented tower with fine stuccos moulded into cornices and into panels. A ledge is covered with lotus-petals ; this is followed by pendant garlands and again by elongated flowery motifs ; there is a file of hamsas or swans which are more Thaistic than Khmeric in idea. The panels on the tops of false doors have decorative arches of makaras, nagas and garudas some of which are strangely sheathed into flowery designs. Small Kaliadamana murtis are discovered in the corners and the theme is often repeated on reduced scale in smaller bands to the cornice-ledges. Whatever else they may be, it must be admitted they show the hand of a master designer as well as the deftness of those artisians who fashioned them. They are also wonderfully ornamented with neat designs. The main building, from the lay-out of which no access to the cell can be detached, is preceded by vestibule in the east.

This has three doors, one in the east and the other two, further back on the north—south axis. It contains long narrow rectangular aisles built cross-wise. The nave as well as the narrow passage leading to the sanctuary was covered by a vaulted roof of ogival arches made pointed by corbels. The passage has a porch at the entrance where two deep niches which were formerly windows like those seen in the Wat Mahathat of Lopburi, but were blocked by thin partition as can easily be gathered from the double vertical crack in the wall.

The Wat Mahathat of Pitsanuloka is Theravadic and belongs to the days of Sukhothai domination. The high columns and the images of standing Buddha, in masonry in the east of the Chedi were just a new innovation to Siam as the most beautiful bronze image of the Lord in the West. This is the famous Jinaraja statue, a replica of which is found at the most well-cared-for sanctuary of Benchambopit. This murti has a flame-top ushnisa and the scarf-end is seen flung across the shoulder over the trunk. The figure is seated in the paryankasana posture, a particular feature of the Sukhothai school. The steeple of the stupa rises into disconnected bands forming into a conical shape which is often the patent feature of the early Theravadic technique.

The city of SAVANKALOK occupies a site which was once the northernmost outpost of the Khmer kingdom in the west. Here in those days stood Chalieng near where the Menam Yom broke into

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rapids. The city held out to the last and when it was overrun by the Thais, a new city SRI SATCHANLAI (or Sajjanalaya) was built at a distance of a mile and a quarter to the west, opposite to the cataract of Keng Luang. A laterite wall gave protection to the city, the strategic position of which impressed the Thai lords who made it their turn capital. The foundation of the final city of Savankalok was of more recent times ; in fact it dates from the time when the last reigning dynasty established itself at Ayuthya. Different people have left their tokens in and about this city ; thus the Wat Mahathat which is at the site where Chalieng was situated is undoubtedly of Khmer inspiration whereas the monuments at Sri Sajjanalaya are of Thai origin. The Wat Mahathat at the river-bend is now a residence for the monks ; it is partly destroyed though the central prasat is in a fair state of preservation. It has a fine appearance owing to its high base. The eight storeys it possesses have a graceful sweep which gradually ends in a symmetried pointed arch. Back of these storyes presents and arial pediment and though none of the twenty eight antefires are ornamented, they are quite in proportion to the touch as a whole. The spire top has a navashula i. e. a threefold trident on which gilded umbrellas are arranged on a diminishing scale. Three high pillars supporting the base are symmetrically moulded. They have reversed ogees separated by a large rectangular border which is supported by a large square plinth surrounded by a

fourfold gallery. Two of the latter are taken up by the statues of the Tathagata. There are images of Buddha in masonry, one of which is a walking Buddha over 21 feet in height to the south of a large unfinished stupa. It represents one of the most striking types of the Sukhothai School of sculpture.

Around Savankalok there are stupas which are enclosed in Sanchi style. The pallisades are of cylindrical and semicylindrical laterites intercepted at regular intervals by square uprights of the same material. These were probably made in imitation of bamboo or tree-trunk staves. One thing may be suggested in this connexion. The task of preserving ancient monument is much more difficult in a tropical country where weeds and trees claw into cracked edifices with their formidable roots which, too, must be destroyed along with the rest of the jungle growth so that they might not revive. Undoubtedly the government departments clear away a lot of these trees and plants but soon they re-appear. Thus the famous stupa "surrounded by elephants" has to be reached through bramble thickets. The "Cang Lom" is one of a number of monuments which have cariatide elephants constructed after the pattern of the famous Mahathat of Ceylon. The Mahathat of Savankalok is also of the same type, and both the "C'ang Lom" and the Mahathat were probably built by the same monarch. These cariatide animals are like the main stupa made of laterite and are covered with five stuccos.

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But Chalieng, Sajjanalaya and finally Savankalok would be remembered even if there is not a single monument in the whole region. They were the centres of the famous porcelain industries of old Siam. Into the soil of this area are buried unfinished and finished glazed earthenwares specially around the spots where the kilns of old were erected for baking them. When the Ceramic industry died in Siam probably baked wares had to be imported for the time being at least from China.

The Khmer hold of the Lower Menam Valley was weakened considerably when one of their Thai governors Sri Indrapatindraditya ( a title and not a name) rebelled against the paramount power and declared himself an independent monarch of Sukhothai about 1250 A. D. There is little record of what immediately followed this usurpation, but his son and successor Ram Kamhaeng created through his genius a name not only for himself but the state he ruled. We have already spoken of the new scripts he introduced. It was he who transformed the small principality of Sukhothai a first rate power not only by fresh conquest alone but by his fine administrative qualities. There is no doubt that he founded the nucleus of a unified national state which has now blossomed into the Thailand, for, most of his reforms and undertakings were far-reaching. In every way he deserves to be acclaimed the first national King and hero Siam ever saw. According to an inscription of 1292 (?) A. D. his kingdom extended to Nakon Sri Tham-

marat in the south, to the Mekong in the east and to Hamsavati in the West. Probably the northern limit of his territories coincided with the southern frontier of the Thai principality of Chieng Mai.

Towards Theravatism of Ceylon, the Thais veered a little later, but whatever might have been the source of their Buddhism, in early times the people of Sukhothai under Ram Kamhaeng followed the precepts of Sakyamuni throughout the Varsa. The court, the noble, the mass both men and women, all were given to charity towards different temples and monasteries. The most famous bonzery of the day was one beyond the forest on the outskirt of the city to reach which took a day. At the end of each year, for a month, people marched through the four gates of the city at the daybreak towards the Forest Monastery with presents of money, food, flower and cushions in abundance for its inmates. Ranks and files, the rich and the poor, all considered it a religious as well as a festive occasion. They sang songs and danced to the tune of music till they reached the monastery. The sun would go down by the time they started coming back. There were Theras and a Mahatheras, the Sangharaja in that monastery which was built as a gift from Ram Kamhaeng. The head was well fully versed in the Tripitakas and was the premier teacher in the realm. He hailed from Nakon Sri Thammarat. In a lofty and magnificent edifice in the middle of this monastery an image of the Lord Buddha stood

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eighteen cubic feet high. People reaching the city by right time would watch Ram Kamhaeng playing with burning candles. Within the city limits there were various stupas and viharas which housed the murties of all sizes of Sakyamuni. Religious reforms started in all earnest initiated by Lutthai who was not only learned but for a time being even wore yellow robe. He was the author of a religious tract called "Traibhumi". Fourteen years after he ascended the throne, the reverence for Sinhalese Vikkhus grew to such an extent that Ceylonese Theras were invited for new light on Theravadism.

Like PITSANULOK, SUKOTHAÏ, the capital of the first powerful Thai state of Siam rides astride the Menam Yom. On the opposite bank, six miles and a quarter to the west is Thani, the more recent addition and the seat of modern administration. Probably the name Thani was derived from "Rajadhani" or capital. In both cities, old and new, there are enough sculptural and architectural evidences to indicate the gradual evolution of a nationalists school of art from a melange of the Dvaravati-Gupta, the Khmer and the early Thai (U'tong, for example) inspirations. Even the early Ayuthyan innovation has found a place in the vast collection of Buddha-murtis made by the monks of the Wat Rachathani from various debris of ruined stupas in the neighbourhood. This heterogeneous assemblage of figures deserves unstinted thanks to the collectors; not only have they saved these old relics from further destruction but they have also

made it possible to study the characteristic features of the Sukhothai School. This school imparted a feminine grace to the statues of the Lord ; either sculptors were women or some ladies of rank and beauty sat out as models. For, the cheeks of these figures are dimpled and fleshy ; chins almost oval ; nipples prominent and hips pronounced. Even the waist appears slender and the whole allure possesses a tenderness which would certainly be eschewed to an image of the vigorous male. Different head-gears suggest different periods of religious trends. Some of the statues have jata-mukutas ; some display flame-tops, while a few wear diademed tiaras. The tied coiffure indicates the Khmer touch, the ushnisa of burning fire points to the Sinhalese, whereas the bejewelled mitres would ascribe the craftsmanship of the murti to the Ayuthyan influence. The Mon-Khmers tried to portray the spirit of renunciation while the Thais wished to depict Gautama as the Lord of the Earth. Hence the jewelry-motif is most noticed in the Thai figures which besides tiaras often have a double girdle buckled below the navel-pit. In some they (the Kalibandhos) droop slightly over the folds of the nether garment. The treatment of drapery by the artists of the Sukhothai School was really a heritage from the Mons of Dvaravati. The monastical mantle is shown tied around the neck, spread almost evenly over either shoulder (lines of drapery here are so fine that they are almost invisible) and its hem hanging loosely along



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the forearm. A part of it is padded in between the arm and the trunks while the rest is gathered up in a light heap at the elbow-bend. The other end of the mantle spreads in gentle undulation reaching almost the feet. What is still more admirable is the apparent transparency of the garment material. The idea of finely-spun silk is sculptured by allowing the whole contour of the body being seen through the folds of drapery. The upright Buddha-murtis are seen in a large number, most of which, almost vividly human, hold up palms whether doubly or singly, in a gesture of assurance. There is only one standing image found at the Wat Pracum Pom, both palms of which point towards the earth, the fingers being not only distinct but sharp and elongated. Apparently it is a modification of the Bhumisparsamudra. Another statue of Amitava from the same wat is seen in a walking posture. It is a marvellous sculptural interpretation of movement and speed. While its head-gear, which is a flame-top, is strictly erect, the neck seems slightly inclined towards the left ; the left arm hangs almost in a limpid manner away from the trunk of the image, the palm bending towards the body. The left foot rests on the tip of the toe while the heel is raised from the pedestal to indicate forward motion. The flowing border of the monastical robe which is tied at the neck and laid flat against the back signifies speed. The right arm is pressed against the trunk ; only the palm is up-turned and the fingers which are extra-long are raised in a gesture of assurance. The Uttariya is flung

diagonally across the body ending in a knot above the navel. Over the nether garment the manimekhala with its buckle is seen. The holes in the ear-lobes are, as usual, enlarged by heavy rings dangling from them. So is the flicker of that smile of perfect content which many have tried to explain as a sign of "ageless wisdom". As the walking murtis were executed by artists of different races, the facial physiognomy varies. This posture was naturally very popular with the early Thais who were always on the move seeking fresh lands to settle down and bring new races under their sway. While the Khmers were being chased out of the Menam basin the Mons were being hunted out of Lamphun. Hence when Ram Kamhaeng and his successors were adorning the Wats of Sukhothai with the walking Buddha images, Mongrai and his descendants were busy doing the same thing in the north. One of the fine examples of the north is the peregrinating Amitava of the Kalkot Wat at Chieng Mai.

One of the interesting ruins of the Khmer-Thai transition period at Sukhothai is the Sisavai : here the Khmer influence is almost on decline and the Thai element is just asserting itself. There are three main towers still standing on the ground and though they are composed of bricks and laterites, they are fast crumbling down. A few years before, for example, a grey stone lintel lay on the ground before the central tower ; it can no longer be found and the incident engraved on it was probably the birth of Brahma. The towers lie on the axis east to west and have doors

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to the south. They are almost square in shape with a hybrid system of false doors and angular redents. They have two halls, one on the top of the other which is a small crypt. Apparently stairs leading to the door (on the south) of the upper hall were connected laterally with the steps that went down into the crypt. The main body of the towers from the outside looks rather low ; it is square-shaped and redented with three projections at the angle between those of the false doors. The base is common to the tower and the false doors the height of which is almost equal to their width. The top-cell has almost the same meagre height. Their pediments form a simple square devoid of decorations with the sides of the towers. A doucine with coarse workmanship near the redent is the part of the cornice-work worth mentioning. An antefix of Garuda is seen at each corner. The makara and the naga motifs in the niche of the false door often are relieved by seated Buddha murtis engraved on some of the arches of the false bays. Some authorities are of opinion that the wat was probably founded only a few decades after the city of Sukhothai. The pure Khmer style is represented by the San Pra Sua Mong which is a prasat in its true sense. The tower is a square one redented with two false doors and a vestibule in the east. Debris prevent access to the interior. The eastern door has no traces left of its small columns. The tower has a large base with great doucined profile. Large blocks of laterite have been employed in its construction with customary round holes filled

with grey stone. The false doors protect the cavity, a feature proclaiming its true Khmer origin, though the outward form of the wat would suggest that it came to be built anterior to the monuments at Angkor Park.

Another wat, the Traphang Tong Luang is probably of Khmer origin though most of the stuccos are certainly additions at a much later date. The Khmer style has been preserved wherever possible as the makara-motif on the blocked niches would seem to suggest. The square mandapa precedes the stupa and there are vestiges of still another entrance chamber where the entrance to the sanctuary exists to-day. Three laterite walls encircle the wat one after the other, which would measure over six thousand and six hundred years in total. Each side has a door in the centre and from the manner of protection one would think that the stupa contained once some priceless relics. Three episodes from the Lord's life supply themes to these stuccos ; the treatment of drapery and the graceful contour of the body as well as the walking posture of the Buddha images indicate the master-artists of the Sukhothai School. It is a thousand pity that such fine workmanship has been allowed to decay. In one scene the Buddha walks with gods ; in another he is with his disciples and in a third he is by himself. The Buddha image has a larger halo while the attending personages have less-pronounced ones. Though the Buddha murtis themselves are not bedecked with jewellery yet the

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over-ornamentation of lesser persons points to the idea of ornamentation having already influenced the artists. Perhaps these stuccos were created sometimes after the first encounter of the Thais with the Khmers. The influence of the Northern Thai, which, by the way, had a stronger grip on the Ayuthyan school than on the Sukhothai technique, is felt here in these stuccos.

The Wat Mahathat of Sukhothai was composed of a number of different shrines, stupas, viharas and chaityas grouped into one place without any preconceived plan. The style of their construction has nothing in common, which shows that they must have been built at different times and by different people. The constructions number over one hundred and eighty nine which are almost buried under weeds. A Thai Chedi with annexes in the Khmer style having stuccos of Buddha's life over the false entrances may be still seen. The Chaityas used to depict Jataka incidents according to a stele discovered in 1882.

The Khmer colony occupied the site where the fine laterite edifice called the Wat P'ra P'ai Luang stands to-day. Three towers stood along the line extending from the north to the south. The prasat was devoted to the worship of Hindu gods but later on converted to a Buddhist shrine. The workmanship of the towers is extremely fine. Here we come across a statue of Buddha in a lying posture on a throne which reminds one of Vishnu lying on the ocean while the Anantanaga spreads its canopy of

innumerable hoods as a royal umbrella. Figures praying to Buddha on their knees are discovered at the base of the throne. The only Hindu deity that still remains is the Lord of Thunderbolt resting on a three-headed vahana.

The mountainous character of the region accounted for long independence Western Laos enjoyed in the past. Even now the people of Payap and Maharat live untrammelled by Siamese laws. The area is rendered fertile by the headwaters of various tributaries of the Menam C'an P'aya. The Mekong flows to its east and the Salwin basin marks its western boundary. On the north lies the land of the Shans and the Lus ; the territory in the west is occupied by the Burmese, the Karens and the Mons, whereas the tribes of the Thai race people the plain in the south. In reality, Western Laos is inhabited by the Youns while the Laotien proper reside further eastwards. The access from the south must have been easier in old days, yet the three-pagoda route via Pegu and Pagan affected the cultural and religious life of Western Laos just as profoundly as the trans-peninsular route via Nakon Sri Thammarat, as a result of which different schools of sculpture and architecture have left their marks indiscriminately all over the land.

Though we have been left in Siam with very little traces of architecture introduced by the Aryan colonials which we could confidently identify with a marked period corresponding to the Dvaravati-Gupta

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School in sculpture, yet in Western Laos at least, we come across not only the massif redented towers preceded by prasats, but the caryatid-elephant idea of Ceylon, the "bristle effect" of the Burmese Pagoda, the telescopic roofing of the Chinese, the convex logenzes of the southern Thai prangs as well as the pyramid-structure of Budh-Gaya are also seen. In fact the more flexible ideas of South Indian architecture can also be detected. Western Laos is like Cherapunji where the North Eastern and the South-Western architectural breezes met.

Some of these schools blended with local inspirations evolved a technique of their own; some display an intermediary style evolved from the Mon-Khmer while quite a number represent Thai thoughts and characteristics. Of late, the monk owners of religious establishment have found light construction of cement-concrete more economic than that of wood and most of renovating work is now done in reinforced bricks. As in Cambodia, apart from its blatant modernism, concrete replacement is regrettable because of the repairer's tendency to mix up the motifs of one epoch with those of another. It is as much bound to confuse the posterity as to saddle them with barbarous anachronism.

Not all wats are beautiful or elegant. The Wat Racakru is a single massive stupa at Payan, which was probably built in the place of an older structure. The sanctuary has stuccos displaying soldiers, personages, and animals all of which are coarse and

crude. One hundred and eighteen miles from Payan, on the way to Chieng Rai stands on a hillock a square-shaped stupa called P'ra That Com Ve which is a repository of sacred relics. It is a two-storied edifice crowned by a small design. The stupa is really a product of Burmese inspiration. A pyramid has been moulded into two stages, the top-most being an inverted bell in shape with a pointed steeple. This part is probably erected after the Khmer style while four vedis at each corner of the compound wall, holding a pole which acts as a support to the metal umbrella. The edges of the umbrella are sharp and they are alternately pierced with a ring with a small tinkler. The pointed strips of the umbrella give the characteristic Burmese "effect of bristles."

CHIENG RAI is located in the heart of Western Laos, miles away from anywhere. To-day it is a tranquil little sleepy village almost forgotten. But it was built long before Chieng Mai came into existence and served as the capital of early Thai invaders. Years before they came further south and destroyed Haripunjaya at the end of the 13th century. According to local legends it was built on the Menam Kok in 1262 by the Chieftain Mongrai. It was certainly a stronghold for the Thai folks during the period when the Mon kingdom of the north was being assailed.

Most of its ancient temples have long been reduced to unrecognisable debris. But it still shows the Laotian technique of telescopic roofing. The end of these roofs is wavy. So are the arris of the super-



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structure, all of which are covered with ornamental wood-work, the motif generally being a dragon with undulated tail. The main facade contains a compartment to facilitate the circulation of air within. The walls on the rear and the sides reach the timber-work of the ceiling and barred windows are inserted between the posts of each truss. The wall and the partitions off the staircase also act as its support. The base of the stairway is raised some three feet above the floor which is paved. Except for shapes and sizes, in other details the Wat P'ra Keu of Chieng Rai may be considered a fair specimen of stupas of its type.

Just where the Mekong traverses the caravan-route between Burma and the Shan states, is located the most northerly town of Siam. It is CHIENG SEN, the modern counterpart of which lies outside its perimeter-wall a little further south. Besides the highwall guarding the town, there were fortified posts built in a semi-circle, which as a defence-measure would do credit to the military engineers of to-day. According to an inscription, Sen Phu, the founder of Chieng Sen built a monastery where he erected a stone statue. Probably these have perished owing to the ravages of time and all that we find to-day are bronze images of seated Buddha. Later Brahmanic influence can be felt from the presence of various deva-murtis excavated in the neighbourhood.

One of the most remarkable structures of Chieng Sen is a single edifice called the Wat K'u Tau. It is a brick-tower with sixteen faces and its erection is

attributed to the people of Youn-nan. There is a group of eight triangles which separate the top storey from the lower one. Some of the apsaras which have been moulded into the lintel have their palms folded against their breast in an attitude of reverence while others have their hands held akimbo on the head. The manner in which these statues wear apparel is rather peculiar and probably represents the fashion which the elite of the day followed. It is a matter of regret that most of the old stupas lying within the precincts of the old city are to-day covered with towering trees and fast-spreading strong thickets. Unless these ruins are not recovered from the jungle much of old history will be lost to the Thailand for ever.

LAMPHUN is undoubtedly one of the landmarks of the Siamese annals. The state of which it was the chief city has merged with other principalities long ago and the people responsible for its power and glory has long been absorbed with the predominant race of Siam to-day. Its old name was Haripunjaya, an administrative centre, if not the capital, of a Mon kingdom founded in 654 A. D. by Camadevi, a princess of Lavo. There are some seven inscriptions in the language of the ancient Mon discovered in and about Haripunjaya ; some of them clearly indicates that it held its own against the Khmers throughout their ascendancy in Siamese soil ; that it repelled during the 11th and the 12th centuries attacks of unprovoked aggression from the growing Thai

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power in the south ; that it maintained its independence till the beginning of the 13th century at the end of which it was sacked and raised to the ground by King Mongrai, the founder of Chieng Mai.

Though there are certainly some discrepancies in dates and detail, yet to the Jinakamalini we owe a number of interesting delights during the latter period of its existence. We agree that the wall around Lumphun could not have been built so late as 1516 A. D. but we are sure that the Mahabala-chaitya, an edifice to the north-west of Haripunjaya, was erected by King Sabbaddhisiddhi, probably at the beginning of the 13th century. The chronicles record that men of two battalions were employed in constructing the Chaitya and the name was given to it in commemoration of Sabbaddhisiddhi's victory over Louvo. The Jinakamalini mentions that only 30 statues of Amitava were placed in this sanctuary, but in reality, the quadrangular Chedy which is five-storey high but for the topmost layers of square slabs contains three standing images of standing Tathagata, each in a beautifully worked niche, thus totaling 60 in number. The base which is of brick is in a sad state of disrepairs ; the storeys diminish in size as they mount up, so do the niches and the figures they contain. The murtis have their left hands held against the breasts, while the right hands hang down against the mantle of the monastical robe. The head-gears have a small spike on the top (perhaps in imitation of a flame). The ring on the left ear-lobe

can be detected and the Mon-face of the images can hardly be mistaken. The treatment of garment folds is in the Dvaravati style from their transparency effect against the contour. The niche is of three arches resting on two stuccoed pillars. The outer edge of the niche has a big halo-like protuberance with three smaller on each of its sides. These haloes have busts of personages similar in appearance to the main statue. Right on the top of columns supporting the base of the storey above (these columns themselves are bigger edition of those niches both in shape and workmanship) is a pedestal-looking short column on a lotus-leaf foundation supporting a bell-like formation with four thin layers of square slabs. One of these, much reduced in size, is the pinnacle of the Chaitya. Close to this main monument there is a smaller one similar in form but with a few differences in details, but its mouldering condition can be only imagined when we say that most of the Buddha images are mutilated.

Still more interesting is perhaps the Lamphun Mahathat, which probably took its pattern from the Mahabalachaitya with the exception of its spire-like broken top. It was erected as a repository for some great relics which, according to the Jinakamalini, were distributed by King Asoka one thousand three hundred and eighty three years before the foundation of the Lamphun Mahathat. King Sabbaddhisiddhi is supposed to have been its creator who only built it nearly 72 feet high. Towards the beginning of the 15th century

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one Sen Muong Ma covered it with a huge number of gold foils which were replaced by gilded copper plaques during the second decade of the 16th century, while one Pra Muong Keu regilded the stupa. It is possible that the old stupa was covered by a new one, an exact duplicate in 1447, we can only say that such was the custom in those days followed in Malay as much as in Ayuthya. That Buddhism of Ceylon deeply influenced the northernmost point Chieng Sen as well as the southernmost point Ligor in modern Siam. Nakon Sri Thammarat was the link of this Buddhist School between Ceylon and Western Laos. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Wat Kukut of Lumphun would bear strong resemblance to the Sat Mahal Prasat of Polonnaruwa in Ceylon built a few years ahead of the former. This model shrine of the wat is to-day enclosed by the present building of 92 cubits in the 15th century.

Though the Wat Mahathat is in ruins, to-day there are edifices around this nucleus which are of entirely different style and of more recent origin. There is a huge bell-like stupa, painted and gilded, resting on a white square base with multi-angled projections, which forms the chief attraction among these ruins of other days. This very newness proves the living spirit of Siamese architecture, which in decadent countries of the east is an inspiring significance. Bands almost concentric just mark the circular rim of the great bell, on the top of which three more bells of masonry are superimposed on another. The topmost

one has turned down lotus-petal motif which is surmounted by a series of ever-decreasing rings which may be compared to the neck rings worn by certain Mongoloid belles. These rings end in a rod proping up what looks like a colossal shell of an ammonite but in reality represents number of sun shades placed one on the top of another. Outside the hideous fence of the compound at each corner is a metal parsol with an elaborate fringe, the whole resting with its long column on a base of masonry. There are small brick-works for burning incenses. Next to this stupa is a building of telescopic roofs. The roof-ledgers are made of patterned wood work and the motif curved on it is a dragon, while at each top-corner of the slants are undulating flames of wood. The columns reach up to the timber work forming a balcony surrounded by railings. Windows are inserted in between the masonry work and even the arris has a wavy dragon-like edge. Between the layers of these roofs are air-passages hidden under the projecting caves, and the whole structure, whether a shrine, or a bot or a library is an interesting style of buildings always found in the Laotien region.

In the northern dialect "Chieng" stands for 'City' and one of the oldest townships with this prefix to spring up was the City of Mai, or CHIENG MAI. It is some nine hundred odd feet above the sea-level and occupies one of the vantage points in the fertile Meping valley. Nearby, rises the Chalk Range at Com Tong, where the natural cave may have afforded

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shelter to the prehistoric man ; it proved at least, later on, an ideal spot for meditation to the solitude-seeking Buddhist bonze who tunnelled an entrance from the top of the height to the recess below where amidst the columns of stalactites and stalagmites, he set up a bronze statue of the Tathagata. Every year a large number of voatries visit this grotto for the deep sanctity attached to it. Chieng Mai germinated as a military camp but evolved into importance when the Thais launched a successful campaign against their Mon and Khmer suzerains, whom they gradually displaced from the soil of Siam. According to the Jinakamalini, the City was erected by the Chieftain Mongrai as capital to the kingdom of Lannatai in 1296 A.D., the same year in which he razed to the ground the Mon stronghold of Haripunjaya. Chieng Mai took forty years to grow into considerable size but another hundred and eighty-one years had to elapse before Muong Keu constructed the city-walls of brick encompassing an area of some 1,500 square yards. For over two hundred and fifty years, the Thais remained masters of Lannatai when in 1558 A.D., Chieng Mai succumbed to the Peguans and the kingdom of Lannatai was annexed. It was not until 1773 A.D. that Chieng Mai which was reduced to ashes during the affray was restored to Siam though the state of Lannatai was not revived. Twenty years after, Chulalongkorn ordered Chieng Mai to be rebuilt when he formally incorporated the territory into his own.

What remains to-day of the mediæval city is the part of the embrasures with the main gates and the moat of stagnant water.

For centuries, several small states owed their allegiance to the Chieng Mai rulers, though most of them have long ceased to exist and their names alone crop up in connexion with the coins they once issued. These coins are various, of different sizes, shapes and metal-contents, which to-day awaken the interest of the numismatic world. Gold was rarely used in coinage as no money of this precious metal has yet been retrieved. But silver, copper, zinc and their alloys were extensively utilized. Money of baser metal is often found with bright silvering on the surface ; some of the coins contain a good percentage of silver, while others have little or no intrinsic value. A curious thing to note in this connexion is that nothing is known at present from where zinc was imported to North Siam as no mines of this metal have been found within the confines of Siam. It would be injudicious, however, to suggest any radical link between the words 'zinc' and 'Chieng'. Some of the coins show yellow-brown tint, which is due to the metal being quenched in egg-yolk or chicken-blood.

Shapes were first devised from natural objects which formed the media of primitive barter, such as sea-shells. Though cowries have been discontinued as the token money of the lowest denomination in India comparatively recently, they were probably



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never imitated in metal as it was apparently done in North Siam. For, the 'Flower' money is nothing but a copy of natural shells. Some of them are round, while others oval, and both have a slight depression on the reverse. Corrugations are on the convex side and the irregular dents are due to crude method of milling and stamping. Next comes the 'Leaf' money which has line imprinted on the convex side with a hollow on the reverse. These lines look like the 'veins' of a tree-leaf. Thus the shapes vary from discs to bars and lumps and have given rise to popular nomenclature of the coins. The 'Horse-hoof', the 'Pigmouth', the 'Fish' and the 'Bullet' coins have been found and catalogued according to their issuing states. Needless to say that none of these coins are of same denomination. Little standard was maintained among different mints and still less attention was paid to the exactness of weight of each coin of the same issue.

The 'Bar' money like the 'Sycee' money does not really belong to the 'Chieng' group of coins. It is a cigar-shaped coin prevalent among the river-folks of the Mekong. Probably the shape was an imitation of the canoes they scooped out of a tree-trunk. The annular 'Bracelet' coins are only an adaptation of the 'Bar' money in more convenient forms. The 'Bar' money has stars and elephants imprinted on it and there is at least one coin of the 'Bar' group which shows a snake-figure with the syllable 'Na' stamped on it. One wonders if the 'Na'

is an abbreviation of the Sanskrit 'Naga' which a number of tribes hold in great esteem. The lump or the "Bullet" money is often an ingot of metal cast in coarse mould. The numbers 4 and 6 in Mr. W. Harding Kneedler's plate IX appearing in the J.S.S. Vol : XXIX, 1937 resemble suspiciously the principales of generation and it would be interesting to investigate if these coins were issued by a state where the phallic cult was revered. The Sycee money is of Yunnanese origin and probably circulated within the borders of Siam as a result of transaction with the caravan drivers hailing from beyond Eastern Laos. A crescent-shaped coin is also found as Tok money which is probably a legacy from the now extinct Pyu race. There were certain coins such as some of the Chieng-Tok money, which were meant for hoarding only. These coins show little wear and tear and were only current on ceremonial occasions like marriages and land-sales and clippings from the edge of the coins were offered to holy institutions to invoke blessings. Some of the coins are perforated ; the holes were meant for facilitating their use as ornaments by women folks. Perhaps a better catalogue of coins would be forthcoming when a better collection is made and the respective history of coins can be traced with greater accuracy.

Chieng Mai has been called the "Buddhistic Rome" and the epithet is a happy one. For, it may be said to be composed of wats, pagodas and monasteries.

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These edifices of a religious nature crowd out residences for lay population from within the limits of the city proper. Even where secular abodes congregate, there too are the ruins of erstwhile sacred buildings, the most interesting of which happens to be the famous Cet Yot, or the Bodharama. The general plan of this 'Stupa' with seven towers strongly resembles that of our Bodh-Gaya. The date of its foundation is uncertain, but indications there are that it was constructed sometimes early in the fourteenth century. For, the King Bilakaraja 'discovered' it in the 1455 A. D. when it was already crumbling in want of repairs. At that time a vihara was added : its pustakalya was restored and its stupa-tops were regilded. A statue in the Khmer style was set up, which was later on followed by an image of sandalwood. All these additions and alterations took at least fifty years to complete. Two distinct periods of architecture and sculpture can be easily detected. The slanting walls rise only to a certain height and the roof they uphold serves as a base to the pyramid towers, all of which end in a bell-shaped canopy surmounted by a spike consisting of gradually diminishing umbrellas. The stuccos and bas-reliefs literally cover the whole of the outer space. The images are displayed in the paryanka posture, legs folded, one on the top of the other while the hands rest against the breast while the palms clasp together. The headgear is quite elaborate and the abundance of the wearing apparels and jewels impart to the Buddha a princely

air instead of the simple-garbed monk who renounced vehemently the riches of this world. The ushnisha can easily be mistaken for a crown he refused. Only his young mudras proclaim the spirit of renunciation he preached.

Each of the stuccos in the Cet Yot is separated by columns the style of which is quite familiar to the present-day Bengal: a thick base topped by a semi-round slab serves as a rest to a short pillar which somewhat bulges in the centre and tapers into a curvature. This quasi-arch is, however, broad enough to bear the weight of an upper structure. In this connexion it is worth noting the flower and the leaf motif which encircles each personage while the demi-gods are missed in their customary places. The halo that serves as a background to the head-gear is taken up by a fanwise spread resembling strongly the flattened hood of a naga. In some of the pyramid-tops, before the final cone is reached, there is a decoration which may be best described as cross between a sikh-puchcha (the tail of a peacock) and the makara. There are also instances where two of these motifs are linked together by fleurs-de-lis. Some ledges are plainly fluted while others are beaded. Some of plaster mouldings seen on the columns of the passage are a credit to the fine workmanship of the day. Less important and consequently the smaller edifices composing this ensemble of the Cet Yot belong to different periods as can be guessed from their style of construction. Most of them resemble

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the grave yard models of spired churches more than anything else on the earth.

Western Laos displays a variety of styles in architecture. The Khmers never controlled this region politically. Yet even when they were overthrown in the Lower Menam valley, their notions in building art were still adapted. The Suon Dak Wat at Chiang Mai is a fine instance of this. The stupa itself strongly reminds one of the small temples built during the same period on the Gangetic plain, but at its entrance in the east, the rectangular aisle of its vestibule is preceded by a building which undoubtedly is a Khmer prasat. This does not, however, signify that the wat, or for the matter of that, any part of it was built under the Khmers. On the contrary, it indicates a period in Siamese architecture when the conquerors had not yet been able to shake off altogether the influence of their predecessors. As the wat was supposed to have been built three quarters of a century after the City itself had been founded, the prasat could not have been in existence earlier than the last decade of the fourteenth century A. D. There is every possibility of its having been raised at a much later date. The prasat is actually a covered passage, a sort of narrow corridor to the square hall communicating with the sanctuary behind. The Khmer inspiration is detected in the square walls of the main tower rising in redents each of which has a set of false doors and each of which divides the common multi-edged massive base. Where

the pillars of the first floor meet the cornice above there is an ogival arch, and except for the doucine the cornice itself is severely devoid of decorations. A box-like formation on the cornice-top supports the terrace above where some of the ornamental flourishes are mere repetitions of those immediately below them. The Thai technique is felt when we view with admiration the elegant stuccos in the lintels and the concave curves of the arrises. Arches display either the motif of a makara with an uplifted trunk or that of a serpent being disgorged by a lion whose head only is shown. One of the most noticeable difference during this transition period is that no longer vegetable glue but ordinary mortar is used for cementing masonry work.

The Thais evolved a better transport and communication system from the outset. There is an evidence that the royal mail from across the seas used to come up the river from a coastal town to the landing place called Trajasan whence it was conveyed by road to the capital via Nakon Thon and Sri Mohipati. With the spread of Theravatism, a closer intercourse, both spiritual and intellectual, sprang up between Siam and the oversea sources of Aryan culture. The route used was known to China whose envoys would disembark at a port in the state of Chaiya, cut across the narrow width of the peninsula and once more board sea-crafts for their country. This helped them to avoid the more hazardous voyage through the straits. This route which has been labelled as the

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'Transpeninsular' passage linked up India, Ceylon, Sumatra and Java with Nakon Sri Thammarat on the Siamese territory from where towns like Sri Sajjanalaya and Chieng Mai were reached. Perhaps the established system of transport and communication was responsible for the harmonization of the Siamese artistic efforts during the classical period. It made at least possible for the transit of heavy images or their replicas to come all the way from India and the island home of Theravadinism and travel to far-off towns like Chieng Mai.

Thus the City of Mai came to be the proud possessor of the P'ra Keo Morokot or the famous Emerald Buddha. It is actually chiselled from a block of light green jasper and belonged to the Great P'ra Chedi Wat. It was supposed to have been executed at the behest of Nagasena, the ruler of Milinda, five hundred years after the demise of the Blessed One. It arrived at Ceylon by 256 A.D. from where it was 'shipped' to Burma by King Anuruddha of Pagan. The king had to abandon the murti owing to some disaster and for the time being the image found shelter at Angkor. From there it was brought back to Kampheng Phet by the Siamese. But there it did not stay long as the Chief Mahabrom took it to Chieng Rai. There it was left alone (owing to the coat of lime put on it) by Sen Muong Ma who failed to recognise it. But later on King Tilok had it transferred to Chieng Mai, where it rested till it was taken to Bangkok. How far the above chronicle

is reliable depends on fresh facts that have to be uncovered, but the material, namely light-green jasper, from which it was sculptured is seldom found anywhere except Burma and Siam. The Great P'ra Chedi which was originally the custodian of the Emerald Buddha was founded in 1401 A.D. and completed after eighty years. The edifice has a square base and is built of laterite supported by brickwork. The huge caratide-elephants hold up the octagonal stupa, the base of which is composed of three layers of laterite. The enormity of the whole structure can be imagined that it can be viewed from a great distance if the approach is cleared of the tropical growth. Only a portion of this wat has escaped the ravages of times, but it is still a repository of some of the finest Amitava murtis of Siam. Most of these are of bronze and are a credit to the metal-workers of yore. Almost all of them wear different expressions, but whether they are of metal or of stone, they present little dissimilarities in features except in a few minor details. Like his brother artisan, the metal-worker, the Thai sculptor was equally adept in executing erect as well as seated figures. Unfortunately for us, only one standing image alone has survived, which looks conspicuous among so many squatted ones at the Great P'ra Chedi Wat. And whatever interpretations may be given to the particular emotion registered on their countenance, not one murti can be accused of lacking dignity, refinement or benignity in its attitude. It



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is the treatment of apparels that should attract our notice to these statues. The upper body is almost bereft of garments save the *uttariya* flung across the shoulder while the nether part is virtually drowned in an assemblage of fine pleats. Most of the murtis have a crinkled cap with a top-knot for their *ushnisa*.

The other image which enjoys almost an equal respect as the Emerald Buddha and which was likewise shifted from Chieng Mai is the P'ra Sihing, which is a Siamese adaptation of the expression "Sakya-Singha". According to the *Jinakamalini*, the murti was forwarded from Ceylon at the request of *Rasaraaja*, the king of *Sawankalok* and the religious ardour of this monarch was such that he went all the way to *Nakon Sri Thammarat* in 1256 A.D. to superintend its reception. As would be natural in these days, there were many obstacles to the progress of the statue, but the king managed to overcome them by the potent grace of the figure itself. The decline of *Sawankalok* caused it to be removed to *Ayuthya*, but king *Mahabrom* of *Chieng Mai* whose mission in life was apparently to collect all famous *Buddhamurtis* in *Siam* marched upon *Ayuthya* with the sole object of carrying off the P'ra Sihing to *Chieng Sen*. He again had it transferred to a *wat* in *Chieng Rai* but finding his nephew hostile to him, he finally took the statue to his own capital.

Besides these statues described above there are

to-day at Chieng Mai still a couple of the Lord's figures which the populace deeply venerate. These are the P'ra Sila or the Stone Buddha and the P'ra Keo Se Lang Kamani or the Crystal Buddha. According to a legend current regarding the Stone Buddha, it was chiselled at the command of Ajatsatru who had some of the sacred relics inserted into the plaque. The legend goes on to say that it was first erected at Rachakrut (Rajagriha ?) but was later on taken by three Ceylonese monks to their island. From there they were supposed to have carried it to Haripunjaya. It was during their voyage they became aware of the transcendent power of the tablet. They had run short of water miles away from La Khun (Langasogga ?), but through the grace of the murti with them their drinking casks were replenished and they arrived at their destination without further mishap. The P'ra Sila, like the P'ra Sihing, was kept back for sometime at Sawankalok before it was installed at Lamphun, but on the fall of the Mon capital it was taken to Chieng Mai. The date of its removal given is 1480 A.D., that is to say, one hundred and eighty-four years after Haripunjaya had been sacked and destroyed, a sort of discrepancy which creates distrust for the chronicled incidents.

Little doubt, however, need be entertained as to the extra-territorial origin of this P'ra Sila figure. The Stone Buddha is in reality an ensemble of figures engraved in low relief on a dark slab of harden-

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ed sea-shells. The central personage represents the Tathagata in a standing posture with an elephant crouching: its trunk is curled up almost touching the hem of the mantle of the Lord's flowing mantle. Gautama's left hand holds down a chaplet, but the right palm is raised in a gesture of 'assurance' to the figure of a monk whose hand grasps a fan. The tribhanga posture of Buddha who has no stitch of cloth but wears a lotus-bud in the place of his ushnisa is worthy of note. His physiognomy is markedly Aryan; the round eyes, thick eye-brows and fleshy cheeks impress one with the youthfulness of a healthy contented person. The nose is straight and long; the mouth and the lips are quite small while the ears are short and roundish. Ear-rings are less pronounced and the holes in the lobes are more natural than those seen in figures of the non-Aryan origin. There are two indentations around the neck, which probably are meant to denote ornaments. The chest is bare neither a yajnopavita nor a scarf is seen across the breast where there is a soupcon of slightly enlarged nipples. The navel pit is marked below which a light layer of fat is displayed to signify the customary 'paunch' of a replete Brahmin. It is, of course, not so pronounced as that of the Siva-Gurus of Java. All the figures in our palque are gilded and the ensemble is apparently a copy of the famous Bharut relief with minor Ceylonese variations. The markings behind the central figure are probably an attempt of the sculptor to imitate

certain letterings with which he was not familiar. Probably, it was brought to Siam by a monk as a memento of his pilgrimage to the island-home of Theravadam. The incident the tablet depicts is that of an elephant attacking the Master whom the disciple Mahananda saves.

Housed in the same Chiengman Wat as the P'ra Sila, is a statuette of great antiquity which is popularly known as the Crystal Buddha and which has long been the focus of a peasant festivity every Vaisaka. The wat was built by Mongrai who spent his last days there. It stands in the midst of a luxuriant tropical garden surrounded by usual Pustakagaras and the Chaitya. The main edifice has a series of life-like elephants of stone lined up at the base of graduated ledges. The actual shrine which is square in shape with a triangular top of shelves diminishing in size and ending in an annular spire occupies the first floor. For a long time the wat has been sadly neglected and if the state of disrepairs continue it is bound to crumble down soon.

The P'ra Keo Se Lang Kamani, as the Laos call the Crystal Buddha is faceted where the ushnisa of gold is worn. The murti-top has thus been rendered opaque while the remaining portion is translucent. The lower part of the stand on which the image rests in a seated posture is inlaid with pure gold-leaf at the behest of a Chieng Mai chief in 1874. The base is well-decorated with flowery motifs and the drapery on which the Lord is placed has been fashioned into

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an elephant's trunk hanging down while the asana itself is shaped like a folded triangle of a napkin. The attitude of the image with the legs placed cross-wise is that of the Bhumisparśamudra. The scarf is thrown in pleats over the shoulder and part of the monastic uttariya is gathered up under the left arm. The almond eyes shaded by scanty eye-brows combined with the thick protruded lips proclaim the Khmeric mixture in the blood of the sculptor who was strongly a Thai in his inclinations. That it belongs to a transitional period is evident from the curly ushnisa with its conical peak. The craftsmanship is rather crude but little there is to suggest any origin but Siamese.

The legend for which there is no reliable historical background states that the Crystal Buddha was the creation of one Khun Sen Tong, an extremely pious man presented five virgins to Gautama in order to have his likeness sculptured. The Blessed One naturally refused to have anything to do with the girls but consented to his other request. This, according to the Tanman relative to the image, happened 837 years before the City of Mai was founded. This original statue, if it was one served as a model to the Crystal Buddha which one P'ra Rama made during the intervening period from a material supplied expressly by the god Indra. The next link in the legend is forged by connecting it with Camadevi, the princess of Lavo. She was supposed to have brought the figure with her when she founded Haripunjaya

from where it was removed to Chieng Mai by Mong-rai. The legend adds that the Murti was taken to Ayuthya in 1380 A. D. along with the Ceylonese Buddha and the Emerald Buddha but all were returned later on. Perhaps the reason for connecting the Crystal Buddha with other images was to increase its sanctity in the eyes of its votaries. Since its supposed return, it has received the homage of the local peasantry who congregate on the 8th of May annually and pray to it for rain.

Whatever is out of ordinary strikes the eye whether or not it is of any historical importance. From the outside, the Wat P'ra Sing Luang presents nothing peculiar, but the shrine inside one of the edifices composing the wat is remarkable for innumerable fantastic dragon motifs which may be regarded as an epitome of the architectural finishes of the Laotian stupas. It has four storeys decreasing in dimensions with the height which is lost in the middle of a slanting ceiling resting on finely carved timber. This miniature would be a credit to any race at any time. The little Wat Ku Tau which is outside the City walls is really insignificant when compared to the massive buildings in its neighbourhood, but its attraction lies in the fact that it strangely resembles a mosque of the Middle East type. On a poly-faced base like that of the stupa in the Wat Mahathat group of Lamphun, rise one on the top of another, five spheroids in diminishing scale with entrances curved like some huge cauldron handles. From the

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second spheroid to the topmost spike, the edifice is painted and on the whole, it helps to break the monotony of the lay-out of religious buildings in general.

*Oṃ Namāḥ Sivāya*

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## APPRECIATIONS

5/2/38.

The University  
Lucknow.

I have perused with much pleasure and profit Swami Sadananda Giri's interesting and learned work on "KAMBOJA" where are to be found remarkable remains of a fundamentally Indian Civilisation and a Greater India which as an empire of thought had extended beyond the geographical bounds of India and brought under its civilising influence a large part of the Asiatic Continent and the Islands of the Archipelago. The Swami's work of research will feed the newly raised interest of the world of scholars in a forgotten phase of India's cultural history.

Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji.

Itihas Shiromani, M.A., P.R.S., Ph.D., M.L.C.

I have read with interest and derived instruction from the attractive brochures written by Swami Sadananda on Suvarnadwipa (Sumatra), Malay, Champa and Angkor Park. They show wide travelling, great labour and considerable research. They are written in stylish English and being fully illustrated are a store of merit by themselves. Not only for his travels but also for his literary efforts the Swamiji deserves encouragement and help.

Saraswati Niketan,

Sd. M. V. Kibe,

INDORE.

M.A., M.R.A.S., F.R.S.A.

Dated 8th Oct. '1939.

Wazir-ud-Dowlah Sardar Rao  
Bahadur.



## **New Asia**

**Vol. 1. No. 1.**

**Malay by Swami Sadananda.**

The author is a learned sannyasin (Hindu monk) who overcoming numerous difficulties financial and otherwise boldly undertook three historical excursions into Malaysia : the first one in 1932, the second in 1934 and the third in 1936. He visited progressively Burma, Malay Peninsula, Siam, Cambodia, Champa (Annam) and the Dutch Indies.

The author not only travelled through Malay intensively but worked also assiduously at the Raffles Museum with its splendid collections of books, periodicals and Indonesian antiquities. There he was befriended by Mr. H. D. Collings, the learned Curator. After giving a brief but highly interesting survey of the Hindu Malay, the author continued through successive pages to describe Malacca of old, historical Singapore, Johore early 18th Century Malacca and Baling. He refers at the end of the book to the caves in the chalk hills near Baling within the Unfederated States in Kedah where valuable pre-historic materials are being unearthed. These have been catalogued and discussed by Mr. Collings and should be of great interest to Anthropologists and Ethnologists of India, for we know, that the Aryan races, while entering Malaysia, followed in the foot steps of the pre-Aryan races of India who used Malay

Peninsula as the most convenient land bridge to Indonesia. Swami Sadananda has earned the gratitude of all Indian Scholars by boldly drawing their attentions to this important yet much neglected field of historical investigations.









